THE MUSLIM VOICE

January 2005 Volume 11 Issue 3 Dhul-Hijjah 1425

Be in This World as a Traveller

Why Study the Hereafter?
pg 2

Be in This World as a Traveller
pg 5

A Journey to Islam
pg 12

PLEASE TREAT THIS ISLAMIC JOURNAL WITH RESPECT
Published by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of Toronto(St. George Campus) and sponsored in part by SAC

M029.001

Editor:
Asmaa Hussein

Assistant Editors:
Khalidah Ali, Nuzhat Khurshid

Executive Assistant:
Farhan Muhammad Asrar

Section Editors:
Yasmeen Khan,
Abeer Chowdhury, Aminah Khan
Musheer Saffie, Humairah Irfan,
Salman Zafar

Writers:
Ahmed Abdel-Rahman, Sirad Shirdon,
Sahla Ong, Shoilee Khan, Faraz
Siddiqui, Silmi Shahama Abdullah,
Sumayyah Hussein, Fahad Kamal,
Sheikha El-Kathiri, Asim Ashraf,
Mahmud Moallim, Khadijeh Rakie,
Salman Zafar, Asmaa Hussein,
Ahmed Badruddin,
Farhan Muhammad Asrar

Layout Team:
Farhan M. Asrar, Salman Zafar,
Asmaa Hussein

Distribution Coordinator:
Samar Javid

Webmaster:
Samar Javid

Advertising Coordinator:
Khalidah Ali

Advisor:
Zeenat Malam

Cover design by Abeer Chowdhury

Table of Contents

Why Study The Hereafter?....2
From The Desk of TMV....3
Sudan: Have We Forgotten?....4
Be in This World as a Traveller....5
The Final Day: Paradise and Hell....6
Five Tools for Success....7
MSA Happenings....8
Time: There it Goes Again....10
A Journey to Islam....12
Opinions & Analyses: A Tribute to Sheikh Zayed....14
Marhaba , Welcome Indeed!....15
Great Muslims....16
What Makes a Good Resume?....19
Travelling The Road....20
It's "Assalaamu Alaikum" not 'ASA'....21
Our One Way Ticket to The Hereafter....22
Terrorism & The Muslim Community....23
Poetry Corner....24
The Corny Corner....28
Prayer Space on Campus....30
Places to be on Campus....31
Entertainment, Poll Results....32

The Muslim Voice
c/o Muslim Students' Association
21 Sussex Avenue, Suite 405, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1J6
E-mail: muslimvoice@yahoo.ca Phone: 416-946-7788

The Muslim Voice is a non-profit magazine published by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of Toronto, St. George Campus.

Disclaimer: The ideas and opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of The Muslim Voice, the Muslim Students' Association, or of the editors or staff.

Why Study the Hereafter?

Based on an excerpt from Anwar Al-Awlaki's CD series The Hereafter (Al-Basheer Company for Publications and Translations)

Our souls were created for eternity. We think this is our home and we are attached to the pleasures of this world, but we do not belong here.

We are on a train, and this world is only a station on the way to our destination. Our ticket has three slips. We live in the womb for nine months, and when we are born, one slip is torn off the ticket. Then we live in this world for awhile, and when we are dying the second slip is torn off. Then we have one slip left, and that will be torn off either in hellfire or in paradise; that is the final destination.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) compared our time in this world to the rest a traveller takes under the shade of a tree before continuing on his journey. We are instructed to be like this traveller, and recognize that our time in this world is but a moment in the scheme of things. We were not made for this world.

Can we stop time? Its movement erodes our existence in this world, ripping away at our lives with every passing second.

Why learn about the hereafter? Since we must have the correct intention for everything we do, we should be clear on the objectives of studying the hereafter.

1. It is a pillar of faith: part of *iman* is to believe in the last day.
2. It is the key to individual and social change.

There are so many problems in Muslim societies. Why are there Muslims who drink, Muslims who commit adultery and fornication, Muslims who deal with interest, and Muslims who lie? What's missing?

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "If the first thing revealed in the Qur'an was, 'Do not drink,' the people would have said, 'We are never going to stop drinking.' And if the first thing revealed in the Qur'an was, 'Do not commit fornication and adultery,' the people would have said, 'We are never going to stop committing fornication and adultery.' But the first things that were revealed in the Qur'an were the chapters that mentioned paradise and hellfire, until the hearts were attached to Allah. Then the orders of permissible and forbidden came down."

In these few words, Aisha gives us a program of individual and social change. Most of the laws of Islam were revealed in Madinah. During the Makkah period before that, the companions were being prepared to receive the law. This preparation was through the mention of paradise and hellfire, the hereafter, the unseen – until their hearts were attached to Allah. Until the veils of darkness were lifted from in front of their eyes. Then the orders of what was permitted and forbidden were revealed.

A major problem in our societies is insufficient *iman*. Our hearts are harsh and rough, and nothing will soften these hearts except the reminder of the hereafter.

The prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and cry much."

Prophet Muhammad used to speak of death, the hereafter, and the Day of Judgment constantly. This was a result of his concern and mercy for his people: he cared about them very much and didn't want them to come to harm. On one occasion, he stood on the pulpit and gave a speech that consisted of the words, "I warn you of the fire, I warn you of the fire." He repeated it over and over, and his voice was so loud that one of the companions said if someone was in the marketplace they would have heard him. The narrator of this Hadith said the companions in the mosque could be heard weeping.

On the issue of social and individual change, compare the prohibition of alcohol in the United States to the prohibition of alcohol at the time of Prophet Muhammad.

From 1920-1933, U.S. Congress banned the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcohol. During this prohibition, millions of dollars were spent to enforce the law, half a million people were thrown in jail, and thousands of people were killed. Despite this, the consumption of alcohol did not change; people manufactured it in their houses and diseases spread due to the unhygienic process. After 13 years of this misery, the ban was lifted. The most powerful nation on earth couldn't ban a drink.

Over fourteen hundred years earlier, the verse forbidding alcohol was revealed. As soon as the prophet recited it, his companions spread the news in the streets.

Anas ibn Malik, who was serving alcohol to some of the companions when the announcement forbidding it was made,

threw the jug from his hand. The companions who had the cups in their hands threw them down, those who had alcohol in their mouths spit it out, and some of those who had already drank it induced vomiting.

It was said that the streets of Madinah were flowing with alcohol. Immediate obedience was the result of this prohibition, and without any law enforcement. Why did it work in Madinah and not in the U.S.? The difference was belief and God-consciousness. The companions were prepared to receive the orders of Allah and carry them out without hesitation.

We need to prepare ourselves to receive the guidance of Allah by recognizing the reality of the hereafter, and living between the hope of reward and the fear of punishment.

Travelling...

I am the drowsy traveller
on the camel
the bike
the subway
the plane
my head droops, snaps back up
eyes struggle with sleep
Open, shut. Open, shut.

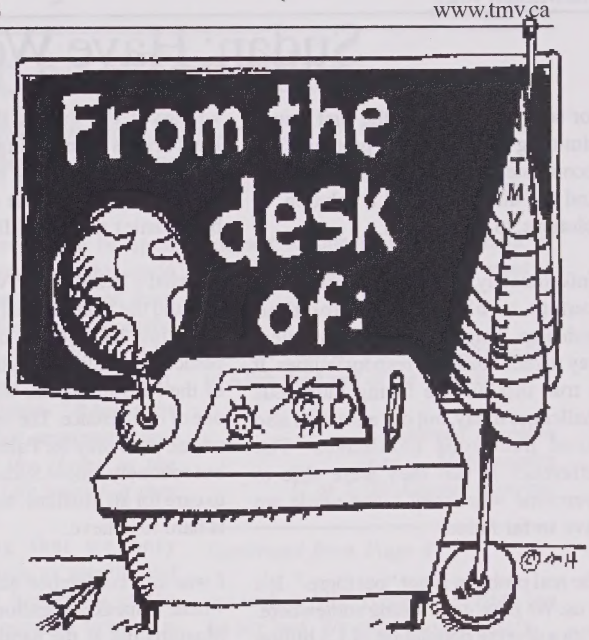
I look calm, but
there's a war inside
reality hides
in the fortress in my core
small,
precariously guarded
while the dream surrounds,
a toxic cloud
whispering through the cracks
in the door

It is a strange struggle, this
my eyes are drunk with the dream
I think it's real.
it floods my eyes
with colours, shapes, emotions

and the truth lies beneath

it's a code I can't break
but the nugget
-gold-
shines like sun in the night.

Sumayyah Hussein
Journalism student, Ryerson University



THE MUSLIM VOICE

Assalaamu Alaikum

We are now into the new year and a new term. In this time we all have a bit of a relief from the stress of exams and essays. Therefore, we should take the time to reflect on our actions of the past year: our successes and failures, our goals and achievements, and the intentions behind our actions. As we assess our actions, we should aim to try to improve upon them in all areas including our schoolwork, our careers, and our practice of Islam. We should also try to take the time to do the things we neglected when we were busy during the December struggle, and try to get ahead before we get busy again. Most importantly, RELAX! (just a little) The time for relaxing will disappear soon enough :).

And Allah knows best

Asmaa Hussein
Editor, The Muslim Voice

Sudan: Have We forgotten?

For self-improvement, the first step is admitting that you have a problem. The second step is defining that problem. And the third is to find a solution, or solutions, to the problem.

Unfortunately, too often, Muslims are content to blame others for their problems. This is simply a convenient way to relinquish our responsibilities. It is true that we are facing numerous challenges today, but our ancestors also faced numerous challenges. The difference is that they were able to overcome what they faced while we have so far failed.

The real problem is not "out there." It's in us. We have gone wrong somewhere. With a diverse population of 1.5 billion and 65% of the world's known oil reserves, it is abundantly clear that we are not inherently helpless and hopeless but that we have made ourselves so.

This is something that we have been in denial about. In fact, I think that denial is our single greatest flaw at the moment. We're in denial of our own responsibilities. We are in denial of our own mistakes in creating the current situation. We are in denial that fundamentally, we are the problem.

Let me illustrate this with a few current events.

The current death toll in Sudan has exceeded 70 000. There are over a million refugees in Darfur who are in desperate need of aid. The violence is essentially tribal - both sides are Muslim, both sides speak Arabic - but only one side claims the Arab identity. The 'Arabs' are nomadic and have frequently come into conflict with the sedentary farmers for a long time.

What led to the current crisis is complex and involves foreign governments. But whatever the cause, the sedentary Darfurians are being butchered, tortured, and horribly raped. Let me remind the reader with emphasis that both parties are MUSLIMS.

So what's being done? Very little. The UN and the international community is dragging its' feet as usual. What's particularly galling though is the reaction of the Muslim world, which has been one of indifference. The *imams* regularly advise us to pray for Palestine and Iraq, but routinely ignore Sudan. They claim to care for all Muslims, but at times that is hard to believe.

I was at a conference many years ago where a speaker mentioned that more Muslims die at the hands of Muslims than anyone else. Mass murder carried out by Saddam Hussein and other tyrants bears him out. So does the Iran-Iraq war where the death toll hit one million. And of course sectarian violence where Muslims regularly attack Mosques, killing worshippers as they pray.

And does anyone remember the slaughterhouse that was Sierra Leone? The one where babies had their limbs amputated? 60% of that country is Muslim. The Turkish-Kurdish civil war had a death toll in the tens of thousands. The Pakistani army in a Jordanian refugee camp, trying to establish order, once massacred Palestinians. Speaking of the Pakistani army, it carried out mass-rape in what was then East Pakistan before it broke away and became Bangladesh. Coming back to the Palestinians, in a recent visit to Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, a Palestinian Authority Minister remarked that their condition was worse than those living in the occupied territories.

Tragically, there are countless other such instances that could be mentioned. Be aware that all have their own political and social context, but that does not justify them.

Let me pose this question: If we can't even stop a horse and camel-riding militia from killing our brothers and sisters in Sudan, then what chance do we have against armoured vehicles, tanks, helicopter gunships, and F-16 jets, elsewhere?

And, you know what hurts the most? When a Muslim kills a Muslim. If an enemy kills a Muslim, it is tragic, but expected. After all, they are enemies. But a Muslim is someone you should be able to trust. When I have my back to a Muslim I expect to be safe, not have a knife stuck in it.

We need to stand up for justice against anybody, including ourselves - especially ourselves.

We need to learn to stop hating. Life is too short to hate. We must live on the love of Allah (Glory be to Him), rather than live on hate. Sure, we must hate the evil that people do, but we must not hate the people themselves. All people are part of creation.

Keep in mind that when someone who opposes you, stops opposing you and accepts Islam, he or she is to be welcomed with open arms as a fellow brother or sister. This would not be possible if our hatred was for them rather than for the evil of their actions.

It is our striving for Allah (Glory be to Him) and our love for Him that inspires us to struggle for justice, to sacrifice our comfort, and to give up our dreams for this *dunya*, knowing that there is something much better on the other side. It is through our longing for Him that we can build a better world and put aside our desires. Either hatred can be

Continued on Page 5

Be in this World as a Traveller

"If you reach the evening, do not expect the morning; and if you reach the morning, do not expect the evening; and take from your health for your sickness and from your life for your death."

[Bukhari]

All praises and gratitude are due to Allah, the Most High and Sublime. We testify that there is no God worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and last Messenger. Whoever Allah guides there is none who can mislead, and whoever Allah leads astray, in His infinite knowledge and wisdom, for such a person there is no guide.

The purpose of our existence here on earth is to worship Allah as He says in His Most Excellent words, *"And I have not created Jinns and men, except that they should serve (worship) Me"* [Quran 51:56]. As such, there are consequences for being disobedient to Allah and of course there are rewards for those who serve their Lord. Thus, we see that this life that we are experiencing is only an introduction for the real life that is to follow. The life of this world ends, whereas the next life is eternal. With regards to that, the prophet (peace be upon him) has given us valuable advice on how to live this world:

On the authority of Ibn Umar (*radiallahu ᶜanhu*) who said, "The Messenger of Allah (*salalahu ᶜalayhi wasalam*) grasped my shoulder and said, 'Be in this world as a stranger or a passerby

[Bukhari]

From this *hadith*, we can understand that this life ultimately ends and that everyone shall taste death. As Allah says, *"Every soul shall have a taste of death"* [3:185]. Unfortunately, many people behave in such a manner that makes them oblivious of this fact. Therefore, a Muslim should not consider this world as his orher home. Our final abode is the hereafter.

The prophet (peace be upon him) said that we should be in this world as strangers because all we need from this life is the ingredient to be successful in our final resting place. It would be naïve to attach ourselves to this world. Allah says in the Quran, *"What is the life of this world but amusement and play? But verily the Home in the hereafter, - that is Life indeed, if they but knew"* [29:64].

Everything that we busy ourselves with, such as wealth and children, will not benefit us in the hereafter. What is required from us is to make the most of our short lives in this world and not waste our time with trivial matters. Having said that, Islam is not against having children and acquiring wealth. But, we are encouraged to remember death and prepare for it.

Being in this world as a traveller also means that a Muslim has to struggle against his or her desires, and train the soul not to follow our own desires and temptations. The prophet (peace be upon him) said, "A wise man is the one who calls himself to account and does noble deeds to benefit him after death; and the foolish person is the one who subdues himself to his temptations and desires and seeks from Allah the fulfillment of his vain desire" (At-Tirmidhi).

We live in a time when patience and gratitude are absent from the characteristics of people. People are never satisfied with they have. Such a foolish person will live a miserable life and there are no benefits for him or her in the after-life. The goal of this life is to be successful in the hereafter and as such, living a simple life and remembering death would keep us focused on our goal. The narrator of my opening *hadith*, Ibn Umar used to say:

And the close of our call is: Praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds.

Mahmud Moallim
Year 2, Mathematics
U of T (St. George campus)

Continued from Page 4

our lord, or Allah (Glory be to Him) can be our lord. We must choose wisely.

Let's not forget when Ali ibn Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) had his enemy floored and was about to finish him off, when the enemy spat at him. Ali immediately restrained himself and didn't land that final fatal blow. Why? Because he was fighting not for himself, not for revenge, not for the suffering that he had endured at the hands of the enemy (although he would have been perfectly justified to do so), he was doing it only for Allah (Glory be to Him).

We must care not for ourselves but for the Cause. Our primary concern must be for the greater good, which means putting aside one's personal ambitions, desires, and feelings. To do anything else would be selfish.

Remember the story of Ali (May Allah be pleased with him). That, my brothers and sisters is the attitude, no matter how difficult, we must adopt.

Fahad Kamal,
Year 2, NMC
University of Toronto (St. George)

The Final Day: Paradise and Hell

Based on excerpts from Umar Sulaiman Al-Ashqar's Paradise and Hell (International Islamic Publishing House)

Paradise and hell have already been created. They will never come to an end or cease to exist. Allah (Glory be to Him) created Paradise and Hell before the rest of creation, and He created inhabitants for each of them. Whoever He wishes will enter paradise by His Grace and Mercy and whoever He wishes will enter hell as a result of His justice. Paradise and its pleasures will never pass away and neither will hell and its torments.

Hell

Hell is the abode which Allah has prepared for those who do not believe in Him, those who rebel against His laws and disbelieve in His messengers. It is the punishment for His enemies, the prison for evildoers. Hell is huge, vast, and immensely deep.

Both paradise and hell have different levels; the lower the level in hell, the greater the intensity of the heat. The hypocrites will suffer the worst punishment, and so they will be in the lowest level of hell. Allah refers to the levels of paradise and hell in the Quran:

"For all there will be degrees (or ranks) according to what they did."

[Quran 6:132]

Allah (Glory be to Him) has told us that hell has seven gates. When the disbelievers come to hell, its gates will be opened, and they will enter it and remain there for eternity:

"And those who disbelieve will be driven to hell in groups, till, when they reach it, the gates thereof will be opened (suddenly like a prison at the arrival of the prisoners). And its keepers will say, 'Did not the messengers come to you from yourselves, reciting to you verses from your Lord, and warning you of the meeting of this day of yours?' They will say 'Yes,' but the word of torment has been justified against the disbelievers! 'Enter you the gates of hell, to abide therein. And (indeed) what an evil abode of the arrogant'"

[Quran 39:71-72]

How does hell affect this earth and its inhabitants? Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"Hell complained to its Lord, saying 'O my Lord, some parts of me have consumed others.' So He allowed it to exhale twice, once in the winter and once in the summer. That is why you find extreme heat (in the summer) and extreme cold (in the winter)'"

(Bukhari)

"Know they not that whoever opposes and shows hostility to Allah and His messenger, certainly for him will be the fire of hell to abide therein? That is extreme disgrace."

[Quran 9:63]

Paradise

Paradise is the tremendous reward which Allah (Glory be to Him) has prepared for those who obey him. It is complete joy and pleasure, where nothing is lacking and nothing can disturb its purity. The pleasures of this world are tangible and present, whilst the delights of paradise are unseen promises. People are readily influenced by what they can see and know instantly. The joys of paradise are far greater than the pleasures of this world, which pale into insignificance in comparison. There is no doubt that the joy of the believers will be incomparable when they are led, group by honourable group, to the blessed gardens of paradise. When they reach paradise, its gates will be opened for them, and they will be welcomed by noble angels congratulating them on their safe arrival after suffering many hardships in this world.

"And those who feared their Lord will be led to the garden in crowds until, behold, they arrive there: its gates will be opened and its keepers will say 'peace be upon you! Well have you done! Enter here, to dwell therein.'"

[Quran 39:73]

The first of mankind to enter paradise will be Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the first nation to enter paradise will be his nation. The first group of this nation who will enter paradise will be those who were pre-eminent in their faith and piety. They will enter paradise. They will enter paradise in one rank, and they will be as beautiful as the full moon.

The delights of paradise surpass the imagination and defy description. They are like nothing known to the people of this world; no matter how advanced we may become, what we achieve is as nothing in comparison with the joys of the hereafter. Allah (Glory be to Him) tells us that these gates will be opened when the believers reach them, and they will be welcomed by the angels with greetings of peace:

"when they reach it, its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say 'Salamun Alaikum (peace be upon you)! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein'"

[Quran 39:73]

The people of paradise are the believers and strict monotheists. All those who associate others with Allah, or disbelieve in Him, or deny any of the principles of faith, will not be allowed to enter paradise. Most of those who will enter paradise will be the weak and destitute, whom people tend to ignore and care little about. But in the sight of Allah they are important because they fear Him and worship Him faithfully and with humility.

"And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious."

[Quran 3:133]

"Race with one another in hastening towards forgiveness from your Lord, and Paradise the width whereof is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers. That is the Grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom He is pleased with. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty."

[Quran 57:21]

MIRACLES OF THE HOLY QURAN

The number of times the words or their meanings are mentioned in The Qur'an:

Al-Dunya This world: 115	*Al-Rajul* Man: 24
Al-Akhira The hereafter: 115	*Al-Mar'ha* Women: 24
Al-Mala'ikah Angels: 88	*Al-Shahr* Month: 12
Al-Shayateen Satan: 88	*Al-Yahom* Day: 365
Al-Hayat Life: 145	*Al-bahr* Sea: 32
Al-Maout Death: 145	*Al-bar* Land: 13

If we add up the total words of both "sea" and "land" we get 45. Now if we do a simple calculation:
32/45 X 100% = 71.11111111% (Sea)
13/45 X 100% = 28.88888888% (Land)

Above is what we know today as the percentages of water (Sea) and Land in the world.Yet another miracle in the Quran!

Five Tools to Success

Our tools are the same tools of our righteous predecessors, and our weapons are what our guide and leader, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions used to address the world, despite their limited number and resources:

1) A deep internal love of Allah and belief in His help and His support. "If Allah helps you, none can overcome you: if He forsakes you, who is there, after that, that can help you?" [Quran 3:160]

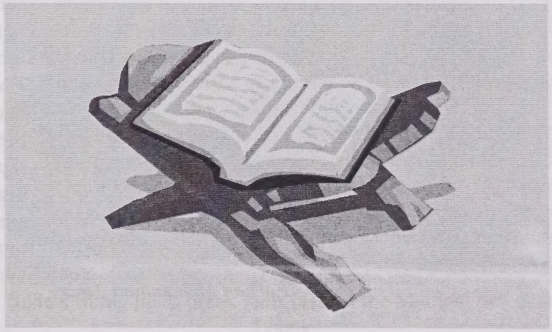
2) A conviction that the Quran is a universally applicable guide. "There has come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book, with which Allah guides all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety." [Quran 5:17-18]

3) A strong sense of the rights and importance of brotherhood. "The believers are but a single brotherhood." [Quran 49: 10]

4) Firm reliance on Allah's love and justice. "Because all their sufferings and efforts were reckoned to their credit as deeds of righteousness whether they suffered thirst, or fatigue, or hunger, in the cause of Allah, or took any steps that angered or confounded the unbelievers, or sustained any injury whatever from an enemy; for Allah does not fail to give a just reward to those who do good." [Quran 9:120]

Source:

"To Be A Muslim" - Fathi Yakun, pp 74, 75



MSA HAPPENINGS...

Sisters' Eid Sensation

The first sisters-only event of the year was a great success, Alhamdulillah. Attendance was over 30 and everyone who came out thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The evening started out with ice-breaker games and was followed by an uplifting message by Sr. Farah Naja for sisters to engage in the bonds of sisterhood and keep the Ramadan spirit alive. A meal of hot, yummy pizza and another round of fun games followed. A local henna artist was also invited and through out the festivities, sisters were getting their hands adorned by the delicate designs of Shaon Habibullah. The evening ended with the exchanging of gifts and a delicious, chocolate cake! Look forward to more of these fun events this semester, InshaAllah.

Sisters having a great Eid Blast!

MSA Orphan Sponsorship Program

The MSA continued with its Orphan Sponsorship Program during Ramadan this year. Donations were being collected at the prayer spaces and during the iftars. The target number of orphans to be sponsored was kept at 60.

Alhamdulillah the donations just kept pouring in before, during and even after Ramadan. **The total collected so far is over $36,000!!! in a period of just over a month.** This clearly exceeded our expectations, we are now looking at sponsoring over **85 orphans**! Takbir!!. This is truly a Blessing from Allah. Jzakum ALLAHU Khairan to one and all who donated, helped collect donations and also to those who help spread the word about this program. May Allah reward you all immensely in this life & the Hereafter (Ameen Suma Ameen). If any one would like more info/ or help out with the orphan sponsorship program for the years to come, please contact: swj_coordinators@yahoogroups.com

Futher updates will be posted on MSA website and also on the MSA-L.

Farhan Muhammad Asrar

Shari'ah in Canadian Courts

Attendance: over 100 people

Alhamdulillah, the Outreach Committee's first lecture of the year was a huge success. This lecture was a continuation of the Discover Islam Series that has been going on for the past three years. This lecture focused on educating non-Muslims about what the Shari'ah is really about. Misconceptions about the introduction of Muslim Arbitration Courts in Canada were dispelled. Shahina Siddiqui, director of the Islamic Social Services Association, spoke about the Shari'ah and its importance in the lives of Muslims. She also spoke directly about many of the misconceptions about the Shari'ah. She also made the audience realize how hurtful and insensitive it is for people to be attributing cultural habits that are common within the Muslim world as being manifestations of Shari'ah principles. Afterwards, Faisal Kutty, a local Muslim lawyer, talked about the history of the Ontario arbitration act and how Muslim arbitration fits within it. These speeches where then followed by answers to questions from mainly non-Muslim audience members who comprised over 50% of the crowd.

Ramadan Fast-a-thon

During the month of Ramadan, the Outreach Committee successfully organized the first Ramadan Fast-a-thon here at the St George U of T Campus. For six days, outreach volunteers set-up a Fast-a-thon booth at different locations on campus to educate non-Muslim about Ramadan and why we fast. We also encouraged them to fast for a day to raise money for the Toronto Daily Bread Food Bank. 10 local Muslim and non-Muslim business agreed to donate a certain amount of money for each non-Muslim that agreed to fast on November 11th, 2004. In total, 142 fasting pledge forms were obtained from non-Muslims who agreed to fast, which enabled us to raise $1420. At the end of the Fast, the Outreach Committee hosted an iftar for the participants of the Fast-a-thon, where a cheque was presented to a representative from the Daily Bread Food Bank. Other highlights of the iftar included the great food and the atmosphere that was created by the reflections and comments of the participants about their fasting experience to all those who were there.

Ramadan: What it Meant to Me

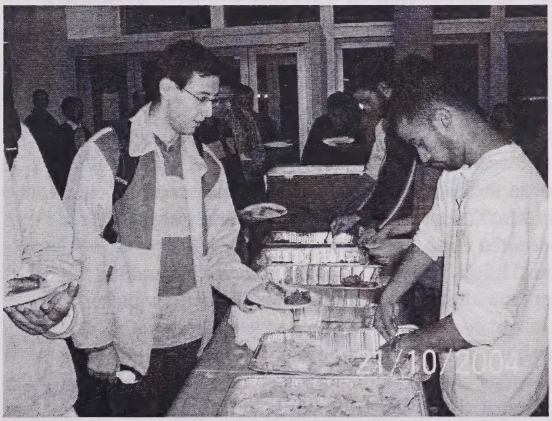
It's hard to believe that another blessed Ramadan has come and gone. To be able to experience Ramadan is indeed a great gift from Allah (Glory be to Him) and I pray He lets us live to see many more Ramadans. For students, Ramadan can be a challenging time when we try to do more *dhikr*, more recitation of the Quran, *Taraweeh* prayers in the evenings, while at the same time balancing academics. *Taraweeh* prayers were offered at the International Students Centre by some brothers that were generous enough to give their time for their fellow Muslims.

Like last year, the MSA provided free daily *iftars* for students on campus. *Alhamdullilah* (Praise be to God), we had a huge turnout for every *iftar* and hard working brothers and sisters that helped to make them run smoothly and efficiently. In addition to some of the *iftars*, there were the bake sales which offered treats such as baklava, cookies and even cake, making for a nice little dessert after the main course. I'd like to thank all of the brothers and sisters that helped make the *iftars* a huge success, including the *iftar* coordinators, the volunteers that helped transfer supplies to and from the *iftars* (especially those tables that were a pain to carry at times), the servers who put the hunger of their brothers and sisters before their own, the helpful Muslim students living on campus who shared their fridge space so none of our leftovers would go to waste and anyone else I may have forgotten. May Allah (Glory be to Him) reward them all for their efforts.

At first sight, the *iftars* may have seemed like simple gatherings of many Muslims on campus breaking their fast together, which in itself is a blessing from Allah (Glory be to Him). But to me they seemed like so much more. You know you have something special when there's a room full of people from many different backgrounds with different interests, all sharing the same belief in one God and His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and sharing a meal together as well. Rather than just taking this for granted, it is indeed something to be grateful to Allah (Glory be to Him) for and at a time when many of us believe that the Muslim community cannot be united, it helps to look back at events such as this one and remind ourselves that we truly can be.

One interesting aspect of the *iftars* that many of us look past is that it attracts the attention of not only many brothers and sisters who are aware of the MSA and its events, but also those who may not be too familiar with the MSA. While breaking their fast at the *iftars*, some students got their first sense of what the MSA is all about. And that's when it hits them: this gathering represents more than just the fulfillment of the simple hunger. It represents the fulfillment of our duty as Muslims to live by the way of life that is Islam, no matter where we come from, what we are studying, or what day we celebrate Eid. We are all part of a Muslim community in which we have many brothers and sisters who care about us and want to make it easier for them to have a *halal* experience on campus. This realization can only mean good things for any Muslim student. At least that's how I remember my first *iftar* at U of T. *Masha'Allah*, there are so many Muslims on campus and even if we don't volunteer at the same events or prefer the same amount of spice in our biryani (or shawarma, or whatever puts a smile on your face), the *iftars* gave me the sense that the Muslim students on campus do remember that we are all brothers and sisters in Islam. I guess that's what this Ramadan meant for me.

Salman Zafar
Life Sciences
U of T (St. George campus)



Azim Ahmed serving food to a hungry brother at Bahen

Sisters lining up to break their fasts in the Medical Sciences Lobby

Time: There it Goes Again

Whatever we do in our transient stay in this world will be recorded. We need to ask ourselves what we would like to have written in the record of our life.

There are 24 hours in a day. Well, about 7-8 of these hours are used up for sleep –assuming it's not exam time! 2-3 hours goes to eating and anything related to eating, like cooking, setting up, buying food. All right, so it's a school day – 5 hours in-class, 4 hours "studying" (add or subtract appropriately to each of these categories depending on your major). Throw in an hour or two of commuting. We haven't even begun to include work.

Let's try that again: there are four free hours in a school day. That may seem like a conservative estimate, but for a lot of people, it is a very generous allowance. That's four whole hours to do whatever you want. Of course, part of this quota goes to getting ready in the morning and other actions that are part of your daily routine. In the end you may be left with three full hours that are solely yours to do with as you please. However, this free time does not necessarily come in a nice, neat clump at the end of the day. More often than not, your precious hours are haphazardly strewn about in small chunks throughout the whole day, making it difficult to identify it as "free time," let alone put it to good use. It may be easier to pin down those elusive minutes if you are one of those people who can make a daily schedule and actually stick to it. Usually though, we aren't aware of our time, specifically our so-called free time, which is the time that we should be most conscious of. School and work bite off a huge chunk of our days, and we consume the morsel left without a thought. Often, those four hours are spent lazing around, or behind one of the two hypnotic screens of our era (the computer monitor or the T.V). We allot so much of our day into our worldly pursuits that we fail to realize how important those hours are. These are the hours that we have no excuses for, the ones we will be most accountable for. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Make the most of five things before five (other things happen): your life before you die, your good health before you become sick; your free time before you become busy; your youth before you grow old; and your wealth before you become poor."

It is said that the way a person spends his or her free time determines the type of person they are. That's because the rest of the time is spent in actions that people must do in order to survive or fulfill their obligations to their family, such as working for sustenance, although dwelling too much on any of these categories is in itself a way of squandering time. You may also consider studying as a subcategory of this, since obtaining an education is a prerequisite for work; nevertheless, there are also countless ways in which school can end up usurping your time, if a lust for success becomes the driving force of your life. After this, there is the time we spend on fulfilling our obligatory duties to Allah, such as our five daily prayers. What is left over is ours to do as we chose – and it is the choices we make that defines who we are in the sight of Allah.

It is reasonable for a person to be in need of some leisure time after a busy day. The Islamic concept of spare time calls for man to enjoy the share of good Allah has permitted for him in this world, and to remember and glorify Him for it. After a day full of energy-draining activities, we can be free to rest and spend our time relaxing in many ways, such as chatting and joking decently with family or friends. However, we should not treat this time as a gap that we must hastily fill with whatever will distract us from our daily routine and give us maximal pleasure. We may end up stuffing these hours with foolish or corrupt activities which have no benefit and may in fact cause us harm. Try and gauge the benefits of your next leisure activity, and you may be surprised at how little value it has. Meanwhile, the days go by, and after a while you realize that you have hardly done anything worthwhile.

For many people around the world in poverty and crisis, there is no such thing as free time. We are very privileged to be in a situation where we can actually have moments devoted to pure leisure. In return, we should try and use part of this time in ways that will have a positive effect on humanity, and help our brothers and sisters in dire circumstances. This time is a trust from Allah, and just like being blessed with wealth means that you are under greater obligation to help those who are not as fortunate, having spare time is a responsibility that we will be called into account for. The time spent in this world will determine what we will receive in the Hereafter. We often neglect spending extra time in worship, even though Allah explicitly says, "*I have only created Jinn and men, that they may serve Me*" [Qur'an 51:56]. There are so many things we can do in our meagre time allowance that will allow us to draw closer to Allah, and they are in no way limited to supererogatory acts of worship or prayer. Helping those in need and seeking knowledge about our faith are just some of the things that can occupy that free-time slot. For those who are understandably too tired to exert themselves, it is enough to

just sit in quiet reflection or supplication, and may serve to relax and rejuvenate the mind after a difficult day. Of course, the best way to ease a troubled or tense mind is to read the Qur'an. Nowadays, we are quick to turn to hollow forms of entertainment to relax and comfort us rather than turning to Allah, who is the only one that can ease any burden, calm any stress and dissipate any sorrow.

Whatever we do in our transient stay in this world will be recorded. We need to ask ourselves what we would like to have written in the record of our life. Even if you break a world record or win a Nobel Prize, these achievements will be considered as mere worldly adornments. The big question will be, "How did you spend your time?"

Sheikha Elkathiri
Year 2, Microbiology
U of T (St. George campus)

Great Muslims Continued from page 16

him onto an island. Prophet Yunus lay on the island, terribly sick and in pain. He remained stoic and repeated his praises of Allah (Glory be to Him). The Quran relates:

And, verily, Yunus was one of the Messengers. When he ran to the laden ship, he agreed to cast lots and he was among the losers, then a big fish swallowed him and he had done an act worthy of blame. Had he not been of them who glorify Allah, he would have indeed remained inside its belly (the fish) till the Day of Resurrection. But We cast him forth on the naked shore while he was sick and We caused a plant of gourd to grow over him. And We sent him to a hundred thousand people or even more, and they believed; so We gave them enjoyment for a while.

[Quran, 37:139-148]

Allah (Glory be to Him) forgave Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) who returned to his people in Nineveh. Welcomed by his people, who now believed in One God, Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) led a prayer of gratitude to Allah (Glory be to Him).

*****

We too, have felt the mercy of Allah, have been forgiven for sins that only Allah and our hearts know of. We too, have been tested, have failed, have been forgiven and have tried again. We too, with the mercy of Allah, can learn from our mistakes and strive to be better human beings.

Shoilee Khan
Year 3, English, History & Professional Writing
University of Toronto (Mississauga campus)

Sports draws Brothers

One of my most valuable experiences as an MSA exec last year was getting to know so many brothers on campus. Brotherhood is amplified out here at UofT. Having brothers by your side is pretty awesome. I have many "MSA memories" from last year – picnics, BBQs, dinners, field trips – but sports have been the venue for meeting the most brothers. Like when we had more than 55 brothers playing soccer or cricket at Kings College Circle in October 2003.

It would take a good six months for me to realise that a turnout of more than 50 people is pittance compared to how many MSA brothers would become involved in recreational activities. In the second cricket tournament 70 players had to be rejected, because 64 players had already signed up! 25 Brothers participated in the hour-long Engineers vs. Arts and Sciences basketball match. The timings of the table tennis tournament were finalised a day before the event. Turnout: 14. Who would think about joining a squash tournament in the last week of March, with exams and assignments to complete? 12 advanced squash players.

But by far, the greatest surprise turnout was at soccer. On the 13th of February 2004, we were expecting 35 players to play in a soccer tournament. I arrived a bit late, and was shocked – there were so many guys that they lined the entire length of the Hart House gym. We could not finish our tournament in 2 hours, even though each match lasted for only 4-5 minutes. We had to continue the next week. And in between, we stopped the tournament to pray *Isha* in *jama'ah*.

So guys, come on out and play the sports you're good at! For more information or to get involved, contact **msaevents@hotmail.com.**

Faraz Siddiqui
Year 3, Biology
University of Toronto (St. George)

A Journey to Islam

A small reminder of the beauty of Islam...

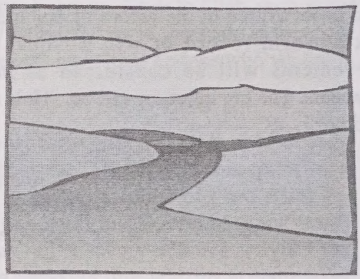
For 23 years, I lived believing that nobody knew the truth about life. I remember asking my mother what the purpose of life was when I was about 6 years old. Unfortunately, I was not born into a very religious family. The answers I received were not rooted in God. I was told that different religions and philosophies were man's attempt to satisfy that desire to know the truth, but there was no way to confirm the reality of the world. As long as I tried my best, respected others, had good intentions, and always worked to improve myself, this was enough to be successful in life.

I grew up in Barrie, a small city north of Toronto. As a child, I had a lot of energy and excitement for the world. Everything was fascinating; the earth, nature, people and cultures were all so incredible. I loved learning and was open to anything that could help me grow. Others labelled me an overachiever, but it was my personal philosophy to never settle for less than I could accomplish.

My life was full of activity. I obtained my black belt in martial arts and began teaching when I was twelve. At school, I received top grades in all my classes. I played on several sports teams, won awards, and was involved with many extracurricular activities. I fast-tracked through high school and went to university early with scholarship. My passion for helping others motivated me. Challenges were opportunities for learning. I made it a personal responsibility to develop skills and knowledge so that I could give more. Every lesson learnt was another gift I could share with others.

During my youth, my mother became interested in New Age philosophies. My brother and I were baptized as Catholics but the practices and beliefs of the faith were not emphasized. We attended church periodically, but eventually stopped going. 'New Age' is a very free-flowing unstructured spiritual movement. Its philosophies are rooted in ancient traditions, but the practices are revised to suit modern life. Concepts such as soul reincarnation, subtle and etheric energy, creative visualization, channelling, and self-empowerment became the basis from which the world was seen. Like everything, I found the principles quite interesting. Several of the individuals who were major influences in my life were holistic practitioners, spiritual leaders, energy channelers, and psychics. When applied, New Age techniques seemed to help a lot of people. The focus of New Age is to identify your soul lessons by the signs around you and then work to correct them, ultimately reaching higher spirituality. Every problem encountered was a manifestation of a lesson to be learnt. Every person had their own path and it was important not to judge anyone for their actions.

In university, life was still busy. I was enrolled in the Immunology Specialist program and played varsity sports. On the side, I went to two additional educational institutions to learn natural and alternative health care. I felt pretty confident in life, but I remember still feeling unclear about its real purpose. Why was I really learning all these lessons? I still believed that no one really knew either. So far, I was able to accomplish everything without any trouble. It did not seem like I was struggling in life. With New Age principles I managed to help a lot of people find their own strength. When approached with a problem, I would try to identify the core issues and then infuse a whole lot of confidence in them to overcome it. To me, each person was unique and had incredible potential if they could only believe in themselves.



I started to believe that our purpose in life was to realize our true potential as humans. To better ourselves in the service of mankind and to reach some form of higher spirituality. I began looking at my life in an attempt to learn my soul lessons. Life became a stage upon which I could learn, and I became quite detached from reality. I would look at all the things in my life as representations of myself and lessons I needed to learn. How did all the signs fit together? What was my next lesson? Why did someone enter my life? What are they trying to teach me?

Incidentally, it must have been the will of God that more Muslims were entering my life. At the time, I believed it to be a sign to learn more about Islam, so I began reading a few books. I attended lectures and seminars and began building a foundation of Islamic knowledge. For some reason, when I was learning, I did not see the truth in Islam. I truly feel that God had put a veil over my eyes until I could remove my current beliefs about the world. My mind was so preoccupied with trying to fix my 'soul,' that I missed the truth completely.

As time passed with me following New Age beliefs, I became more confused. By trying to understand and learn from every detail, I started to become very disconnected from the world. Reality was only in my mind. I remember staying up all night interpreting everything that would happen in a day. There were so many signs, so many symbols, too many lessons that I could possibly learn. In every word, spoken from anybody, I desperately looked for the message behind it. I felt totally overwhelmed, but kept trying to learn. I got to the point of feeling so incredibly exhausted that I developed a mild heart condition.

Something had to be wrong. At the time, I was working well over 80 hours a week. There was little time to sit and reflect, but it became difficult to focus. My brain was running rampant with so many conflicting principles. I finally began questioning my current views of the world. It was scary. I could feel the foundation of my beliefs crumbling, and finally there came the moment when I could admit that I had been living my life wrong. I was in total nothingness. I was completely shattered that the principles on which I built my life were not based on the truth. I asked whatever higher power was out there to show me the way as I was totally lost.

At the moment of complete submission, I can attest that Allah is most Merciful. I literally felt the oneness of God enter my heart. There was a clear voice inside saying that Islam was the truth. I was in complete shock. My family and I could not believe that I would become a Muslim. The next day I started wearing *hijab* and felt such a strong urge to pray the five daily *salat*. The feeling inside would not budge. I visited the mosque every day and made time to learn more about Islam. Everything I read matched exactly with the feeling. For the first time in my life, I felt totally complete with no uncertainty in the world.

Looking back, I see that New Age principles lacked the most important concept - the Oneness of God. I had been functioning from a collection of scattered beliefs. They were beliefs that started from truths but were modified over time, usually for worldly or material purposes. When you do not have a solid foundation, eventually you will hit a roadblock. My challenge in life was not to perfect my soul, or learn 'soul lessons' but to see the truth, which is Islam. It only becomes apparent when you completely submit your heart and soul to God.

Life is not confusing anymore. There is an incredible sense of peace inside that I know I never had. I still live a normal life, but now with everything rooted in God. I am extremely grateful that Allah opened my eyes and sincerely hope that others also see the truth one day. Life will feel complete once your foundation is with God.

Sahla Ong

Alima's Roti and Pastry Takeout

FAMOUS FOR DHALPURIS AND PARATHAS

Try our convenient new

Freezer Packs

Frozen rotis individually sealed and packed in resealable clear plastic containers.

Our Freezer Packs are great for students, travellers, busy moms, and anyone who needs hearty, great –tasting rotis in a form that's

easy to store *and* easy to serve

We're located at
13 Kenview Blvd. Unit 49, Brampton (Near Goreway and Steeles)
905-791-ROTI (7684)

OPINIONS & ANALYSES

A Tribute to Sheikh Zayed

Few leaders today are genuinely concerned about the interests of their people. When they depart, they leave behind an irreplaceable mark in our hearts and memories.

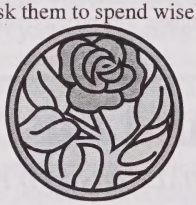
Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) passed away on November 2nd 2004. The whole nation was shocked to hear about the departure of their leader, who was also a father-figure to his people. All businesses and stores shut down upon hearing the news. The speakers of all the mosques in Abu Dhabi, capital of the UAE, were playing the Holy Quran in full volume. Apart from the words of the Holy Quran, there was utter silence in the streets as the country tearfully mourned the demise of their great leader.

Why were the hearts of his people so touched by this great leader? Sheikh Zayed was not an orator delivering speeches with faked facial expressions and emotions. His words were full of meaning and wisdom. His generosity, sincere love for his people, and concern for their welfare was seen through his actions. Within a span of 30 years, under his visionary leadership, the UAE transformed from a desert to a modern developed country. UAE today enjoys one of the highest per capita incomes in the world.

The people's welfare was always close to Sheikh Zayed's heart. "*The most important of our duties as Rulers is to raise the standard of living of our people*," he used to say. "*If God Almighty has bestowed wealth upon us, our first obligation in expressing our gratitude should be to direct this wealth to the country's reform and to provide welfare to its people.*"

He launched relentless campaigns to end youth unemployment and ordered the Ministry of Interior to help the youth find jobs. He invested heavily in industries to develop the skills of his people. He was an ardent supporter of women education, which stands at an exemplary 88% in the UAE today.

When oil was discovered in the UAE, he redistributed the money earned to his people. Palace workers would go around the country and look for needy people and they would give these needy people a year's worth of earnings and would ask them to spend wisely.



A man filled with love and benevolence, his sincerity and generosity did not end in the UAE. It spanned miles to other Muslim countries. He gave billions of dollars in aid to developing Muslim countries for socio-economic development. From his personal funds he gave hundreds of millions of dollars to medical and scholastic institutions, orphanages, and other charities around the world. He was convinced there was a need to bridge the gap between the Muslim world and the West. Abu Dhabi Fund for Economic Development provided grants and loans for economic projects in various developing countries of Asia and Africa in order to carry out his vision.

Sheikh Zayed sincerely worked hard for unity amongst Muslim countries and stood firmly against terrorism and the oppression of Muslims around the world. He was genuinely concerned about the welfare of oppressed Muslim civilians. He frequently voiced his concern for a free Palestine, an end to sanctions in Iraq, and an end to aggression against Muslims worldwide. Emotional condolences were sent from all over the world when Sheikh Zayed passed away. Mohammed Haj, a Pakistani national, wrote: "*I wish to tell my story. I was born in 1970 and orphaned in 1972. I was brought up in an orphanage built and funded by Sheikh Zayed. I was educated in a school built and funded by Sheikh Zayed. I live in Pakistan where today I work in a hospital built and funded by Sheikh Zayed. My life is a gift from him. I am one of many, perhaps millions, he has helped. I cried when I saw on TV that he had passed away. He was unique.*"

Those that had the honour of meeting him would not have the words to describe his compassion, warmth, wisdom, and nobility. He has left behind a legacy of humility, love, concern and service for his people and millions of others. He has served as an example of modern day Muslim leadership. His death has orphaned the people of the UAE. Sheikh Zayed will always live in the memories and hearts of millions.

S. M. Ahmed Badruddin
Electrical Engineering, 3rd year
University of Toronto – St. George Campus

Marhaba, Welcome Indeed!

"When they submit, make peace between them in equity and justice; God loves those who exercise justice. The believers are a band of brothers. Make peace among your brothers and fear God, so that you may be shown mercy."

[Quran, 49:9-10]

After leaving high school 7 months ago, I remained uncertain if I was equipped mentally, physically and socially for university. I felt a mixture of fears of ill performance and of the unknown. The worst fear was that of being unable to express my *Deen.*

During the first few administrative assignments that I had to complete, such as making my timetable, buying textbooks and the like, I wanted to find out if there was a Muslim Student Association somewhere on this campus. My high school had none, simply due to lack of population and enthusiasm. Yet, here at the University of Toronto, I found an explosive array of Muslim brothers and sisters not only congregating for *Salat*, but actively engaging themselves in the urban Toronto community.

"They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoy right conduct and forbid indecency, and vie one with another in good works. They are the righteous"
(Quran, 3:114)

I was advised that it would be best if I went exploring on campus to check out the location of my classes, the registrar and, of course, the libraries. I came across the International Student Centre at the corner of campus, where a place was designated for peaceful prayer. It was a centre where brothers and sisters welcomed me, as if I had belonged all along.

"The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself"
(Narrated by Anas in Sahih Bukhari)

I appreciate the opportunity to share Islam with the help of the MSA at U of T.

I went to the *Marhaba* dinner and met many first-year students in my faculty of Life Science, as well as others (especially in Engineering). The variety of Muslim backgrounds was another outstanding highlight and my fears melted upon discovering a community that surrounded me, accepted me, and promoted me. I met Africans, Moroccans, Arabs, South Asians, and many others across a wide spectrum. It was as if I had breathed a clean breathe of fresh air for the first time in months. After hearing Dr. Munir El-Kasam's address to the MSA brothers and sisters, I felt part of a community which was powerful, unbreakable, and unified due to the guidance and grace of Allah (Glory be to Him).

"The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, 'Be aware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales, and do not look for others' faults and do not spy, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert (cut your relation with) one another, and do not hate one another, and O Allah's worshipers! Be as brothers (as Allah has ordered you!)"
(Narrated by Abu Huraira in Sahih Bukhari)

Since then, I have been coming, to the best of my ability, to *Salat*, seeing my fellow brothers and sisters there regularly. I continue to meet brothers of this enormous *Ummah. Masha'Allah,* I have the ability to shake hands with fellow brothers and say 'May the Peace and Blessings of God be upon you,' daily.

Allah's Apostle said, "Lo! It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert (not talk to) his brother (Muslim) for more than three days"
(Narrated by Anas bin Malk)

There is no doubt that the Muslim community at U of T are among the kindest, sincerest and most open-hearted individuals I have met. It is my privilege and pleasure to walk proudly down the campus grounds with the knowledge of my brothers and sisters in support of me, and I in support of them. And, by the grace of Allah (Glory be to Him), the story does not end here - it has just begun (*Insha'Allah!)*

Asim Ashraf
Year 1, Life Science
University of Toronto (St. George)

Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate from the truth after You have guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Your grace. Verily you are the Giver of bounties without measure.
(Quran, 3:8)

Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him)

*Ibn Abbas narrated: "The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said: 'One should not say I am better than Yunus Ibn Matta.'"**

It feels rather odd to relate one of the most well-known Quranic stories in lieu of a more thrilling, 'blood and thunder' piece about an exciting figure in Islamic history. The story of Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) and the whale may have the elements of great storytelling for children, but more importantly, it has lessons that Muslims of today can relate to.

Of course, drawing sweeping comparisons can be problematic and at times irrelevant, but sometimes these comparisons can be enlightening and even inspirational. By comparing the story of Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) with more current issues in our lives, I hope I will prove the latter.

We begin in a time when idolatry and sin consumed the lives of the people of Nineveh. Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) obeyed the commands of Allah and brought his people the message of worshipping One God. The people of Nineveh asserted that their lives had progressed untouched by any afflictions despite the idolatry that they and their forefathers practiced and thus there was no reason to abstain from their indulgent and fallacious lifestyles. Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) continued to preach and warned the people that if their lives of idolatry and sin were not abandoned in favour of the truth of Allah's message, a severe punishment would finally descend upon them. Disappointment and resignation entered the heart of Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) when they rejected his message. In anger, Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) left the people of Nineveh to their fate.

*****

How many times have we, as Muslims in Canada, had a few vague conversations about Islam with our friends, and then left them "to their fate"? How many times have we had intense conversations with people about Islam, and then left them "to their fate" because they didn't immediately 'see the light'? How many times have we shrugged our shoulders and rendered spreading the message of Islam hopeless because the people around us seemed too far gone to 'save'?

******

Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) left his people in haste and anger, but Allah (Glory be to Him) struck the light of truth into their hearts. For as Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) left, the skies above the town of Nineveh darkened and resembled the flaming colours of fire. By the grace of Allah, fear enveloped the people and they remembered the people of 'Ad, Thamud and Prophet Nuh (Peace be upon him). Allah (Glory be to Him) granted the people of Nineveh wisdom and they realized that they too, could be among the people that Allah (Glory be to Him) destroyed and punished. They gathered upon a mountain and beseeching the mercy of Allah (Glory be to Him), they sincerely repented. Allah (Glory be to Him) lifted the storm, saving them from His wrath and bestowing upon them His mercy and blessings. The people of Nineveh responded with prayers for the return of Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him).

A ship set sail carrying Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) and a crew across a calm sea. When night fell, the waters turned turbulent. A storm violently tossed the ship and threatened to break it to pieces. A large whale, in obedience to a command from Allah, followed the ship through stormy seas. To lighten the load of the ship, the crew threw their baggage overboard but realized that it wasn't enough to steady the ship. The crew agreed that they must throw one person overboard. They drew lots.

Three times they drew, and three times the name of Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) appeared. Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) realized his grave mistake. He had abandoned Allah's cause without His consent. He had left his people in anger and haste, forgetting the value of patience and fortitude. Repeating the name of his Lord, Yunus (Peace be upon him) jumped into the stormy sea. The whale, commanded by Allah, swallowed Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) and sent him hurtling into the depths of his stomach.

*****

How many times have we wilfully acknowledged our faults and sins? How many times have we found ourselves disturbed and angry at our own wrongdoings but were unable to turn to Allah?

*****

Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him), immersed in darkness and regret, whispered words that would bring light into his heart. Fervently, he prayed:

> *"None has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah), Glorified (and Exalted) be You (above all that evil they associate with You), Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers."*
>
> [Quran, 21:87]

Allah (Glory be to Him) heard the sincere plea of Prophet Yunus (Peace be upon him) for forgiveness andcommanded the whale to release

Continued on page 11

Asmaa Bint Abu Bakr

*The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "You will be bestowed two waist collars in exchange for one."**

While most of us may know the virtues of 'Aisha bint Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with her), far less of us know the story of her sister, Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her). Asmaa's (May Allah be pleased with her) story reminds us of the bravery of the mothers of the Believers. Insha'Allah her bravery and piety will provide readers with important lessons when they are faced with adversity.

Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) was born twenty-seven years before the migration to Madinah. She was the daughter of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him), the trusted companion of Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Her sister 'Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) was the wife of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and her husband, Zubair bin 'Awan and her son, 'Abdullah bin Zubair were both great companions of the Prophet (Peace be upon them).

Piety, intelligence, integrity and generosity were some of the characteristics which Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) displayed. When her father and the Prophet (Peace be upon them) took refuge in the cave of Thour after leaving Makkah to migrate to Madinah, she would go into the wilderness to collect food for them. Soon after they left, an angry Abu Jahl came to the cave searching for them, only to find Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her). After demanding to know where they were, she replied she didn't know. Abu Jahl reacted by slapping her hard on the face, yet she remained steadfast and kept the secret.

Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) came to be known as *Dhat-an-Nitaqaln*. *Nataq* is the Arabic word for the belts which women wore around their waist to secure their clothes. Just before her father and the Prophet (Peace be upon them) were about to set off on their journey, Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) had prepared food and put it into a leather bag. However, upon realizing that there was no rope to tie it with, she split her belt in two, using one part to close the bag. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was so impressed by this action that he said, in place of the one waist collar, she would be granted two in Jannah, thus giving her early news of her entry into Jannah.

Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) was left behind with her blind grandfather, Abu Quhafah. He began to worry that Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) had taken all the money in the house, and that there was nothing left for them. To give him peace of mind, Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) gathered pebbles the size of dinars, placed them into a bowl and put a cloth over them. She proceeded to run the old man's hand over the bowl and successfully put him at ease, as he believed the stones were coins. Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) had in fact taken all the money to spend it in Allah's way.

When she was migrating to Madinah she went into labour and bore a son, 'Abdullah bin Zubair (May Allah be pleased with him). He grew up to be a knowledgeable and brave man. His mother went to live with him when he moved to Makkah. He did not accept Banu Umayyah as the caliph and tried to set up his own caliphate. He won the respect of most of the Muslims. When 'Abdul Malik bin Marwan took the throne, he sent Hajjaj bin Yusuf as a representative to Hijaaz. Chaos ensued when Hajjaj took control of the Syrian forces and an intense battle erupted between the Muslims and Hajjaj's army.

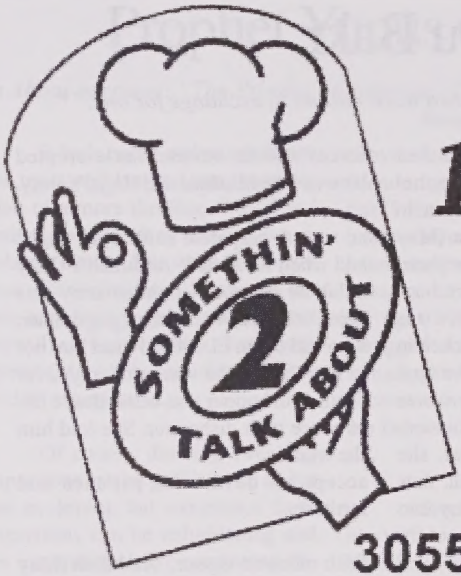
A desperate battle was waged and when it seemed 'Abdullah's (May Allah be pleased with him) army was going to lose, he visited his aging mother, who had taken ill. She advised him not to fear death if he was in the right, for death with honour was better than a life of peace with dishonour. She told him she would
accept his death with patience and fortitude.

With renewed vigour, 'Abdullah (May Allah be pleased with him) returned to the battlefield and was martyred. To display his victory for all to view, Hajjaj hung up the dead body of 'Abdullah. On the third day, a blind and aged woman tried to recover her son's dead body and wondered why her son had not been brought down yet. Hajjaj went to go visit her some time later and asked her if she had seen her son. She bravely retorted that while he had ruined her son's life in this world, her son had ruined his life for eternity.

One day, Hajjaj was giving an unflattering speech about 'Abdullah in the Haram. Prior to *Salaat*, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar stood up and called Hajjaj a liar and a hypocrite, and defended 'Abdullah as a righteous man. He then walked up to 'Abdullah's dead body and said, "Peace be upon you Abu Khubaib." After a few days, Hajjaj finally disposed of 'Abdullah's body into a graveyard. Upon this news, Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) finally bathed her dead son and *salaatul-janaazah* was performed.

Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) would always pray with full

Continued on Page 20



Halal Restaurant and Caterer

3055 Dundas Street West
MISSISSAUGA
905-607-0867

78 Gerrard Street West
TORONTO
416-260-1752

OUR SPECIALS...

BURGER FRIES & CAN COKE $5.99

SOUVLAKI W/ 500ml COKE $4.99

CHICKEN SHAWARMA W/ 500ML COKE $5.99

CHICKEN WINGS & FRIES $5.99

What Makes a Good Resume?

As one who pleases God (Glory be to Him), the jobs we are applying to should be ethically sound, *halal* and above all an honest source of income. Once these requirements are met, what are some key success strategies for the summary of your talents, skills, attitudes and experiences – as encapsulated in your résumé? Here are the top 10:

If you don't write it down, they will assume otherwise. We often forget the small tasks we performed on the job, such as balancing cash, faxing, restocking shelves, making orders, answering telephone inquiries, labeling items and other various responsibilities that we assume that the reader will know from reading 'responsible for store'. Be specific and know that if you don't have it on your résumé, they might assume that you didn't have that much responsibility.

You have more skills than you realize. Studying for tests, preparing for exams, collaborating on projects with a team of students and determining your thesis are skills that are 'transferable' in the workplace: organizational skills, eager to learn, cooperative team player, detail-oriented and creative problem solver are just some adjectives that may describe these 'school' skills. Include them under titles on your résumé such as 'Relevant Experience' or 'Relevant Project Work' to add to your paid and volunteer experience.

Avoid accomplishments from high school unless the person hiring went to the same high school and this would hold some relevance for him/her. Replace this space with your degree to be received in full and in bold on your résumé, comma, University of Toronto. Underneath this you can insert your major, minor and then related courses. Attending university, it is assumed that you attended high school and therefore it does not need to be mentioned.

Include your professional memberships, associations and clubs, if they are relevant or would add merit to your application.

If you have a cover letter, it is often unnecessary to include a 'Career Objective' on your résumé as it is repeating itself. **Remember to cater each cover letter and résumé to the position you are applying for**. Print out the job description and highlight all the skills they are asking for. Match your résumé to each of these and 'checklist' them off as you go. Be sure to include two to three short strong examples in your cover letter of these skills. The easiest way to accomplish this is to do a mini-thesis of yourself in the first introductory paragraph of your cover letter, such as "I am applying for.... With my studies in computer engineering and experience in software development, I would be an asset to your company".

Format is important. Have someone look over the format, organization and content of your résumé for their first impressions of you based on the paper. Often, this will be the same impression employers will have and it can give you hints on where to improve. Visit your university career centre for a résumé critique or look at samples in your career resource library.

Understand that you are only as interesting as you let yourself be. This means that every sentence in your cover letter and résumé should be meaningful and yet concise. Even the best writers have a hard time doing this, so don't be too hard on yourself. Re-word sentences to ensure adjectives are first, tasks are second, and results last. This gives the employer an image of what you are like as an employee.

Take the time to write a focused cover letter as the employer may read this first before reading the résumé. The résumé contains the facts and the cover letter is the conversation to string these beads of your talents together. Spend as much time on the cover letter as you do your résumé. The last paragraph should restate your strengths and background in short as well as something about the company that makes it so great in your eyes. Why do you want to work for them versus anyone else? Include your contact information and that you look forward to hearing from them soon.

Be confident, not apologetic. Often, it can mean the difference between a job interview and the paper shredder. Confidence in North America indicates that you believe in what you have to offer and that your skills will be a benefit to them. Lack of it indicates that there is something missing in you.

Research more on how to make an outstanding résumé, but always keep evolving this writing piece and know that you will continue to improve. **Inject your enthusiasm, personality and above all, your true self** (while still being professional) in your writing and this will shine through amongst the others, *Insha'Allah.*

These are just a few tips by the grace and guidance of Allah (Glory be to Him). Seek Allah (Glory be to Him) and his pleasure and *Insha'Allah* all difficult things will be made easy. I pray that all of you find work that is meaningful, honest and above all, allows you to continue in the remembrance of Allah (Glory be to Him) as we are only travelers in this world and the best record is the one of our good deeds.

Your Sister in Islam

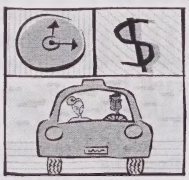
Travelling the Road

Life's Journey is not as long as we think...

I was tavelling with my wife sitting next to me in the car and my two kids fidgeting around in the back. I thought to myself 'What a long journey I have in front of me!' It was a hot sunny day and I was on the highway heading to an unknown destination. After a few miles, I saw a man on the roadside waving his hand, asking me to stop. I approached him and asked, "What do you want?" "Take me with you," he replied. "Who are you?" I asked. He replied "My name is Money and I can provide you with dollars at any moment you want." What an opportunity! I turned to my wife and told her to move to the back immediately. I asked the guest to make himself comfortable at the front. I started dreaming of the pleasures and fantasies that I could turn to reality now.

I continued my trip with my valuable passenger next to me. Soon after, I saw another man waving on the roadside. I stopped and asked, "What do you want?" He also replied, "Take me with you." I started worrying about the space left in my car. "Who are you?" I asked. He replied, "My name is Fame and I can give you fame and elevate your status in society." I started to realize the bounties that I was collecting. I ordered my children to squeeze at the back to make some more room for the new passenger. I invited the new guest to accompany us on our trip.

With the luxuries I was carrying, I continued my trip. I saw an old handsome man with a white beard and a white cloak waving for me to stop. I stopped again and asked excitedly, "What do you want?" "Take me with you," replied the man, "I am your *deen* (religion) and you will need me at all times." I was surprised. What was he doing here? "Oh my *deen*, I love you and I really need you," I explained, "but what are you doing out here in the sun? You are supposed to stay in the mosque and we will come to you when we need you." The old man looked at me with a sad face and said, "My son, believe me, you will only be successful with me." I looked back and saw the big smiles on the faces of the passengers and I remembered the luxury that I would be living in. "There is no place for you in the car. I will drop the passengers at their destination and then I will come meet you at the mosque," I answered. The old man turned around and left in a distressed state. He wanted to join us badly, but honestly there just wasn't any space in the car!



Not long after that, I met a young man on the side of the highway waving at me eagerly. I wondered to myself, 'Who could this be?' I stopped and asked him, "What do you want?" He replied, "I'm sorry sir. You will have to leave with me. I am Death and I have been sent to take you." I was shocked. "What about all those passengers? What about my money, position, family?" I screamed. "Look at all these passengers I have with me. You must take us together!" The young man said "I'm sorry my friend. You are not allowed to take any of them. You are only permitted to take the *deen* with you, but I don't see him here!" I replied "Oh...just give me a minute and I'll be back. I will pick him up. I just met him earlier." "Sorry," replied the young man. It was time to go. I left my belongings, friends and family.

It was not such a long trip after all.

Ahmed Abdel-Rahman
MASc Civil Engineering
University of Toronto (St. George campus)

Great Muslimah, Continued from page 17

concentration. Her husband narrated when he came home one day, he saw her praying and weeping, repeating the ayah: *"Allah has blessed us and saved us from the torture of the burning winds."* [Quran, 52:27] Like many of the *Sahabiyat*, Asmaa (May Allah be pleased with her) had a sharp memory and had many *ahadeeth* attributed to her. Many companions and successors would come to her for guidance and verification of *ahadeeth*.

She passed away in the seventy-third year after Hijrah. May Allah (Glory be to Him) shower her with His mercy. Verily, there is much to be learnt from Asmaa's (May Allah be pleased with her) never-ending Iman in Allah (Glory be to Him), the Most High. SubhanAllah, she encouraged her son to go into the battlefield when he himself was scared. Her son's dead body was hung over the city for many days, yet she was patient, relying on her faith in Allah (Glory be to Him). May Allah (Glory be to Him) help us all to emulate such courageous women.

Reference: Great Women of Islam by Mahmood Ghadanfar (revised by Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri).

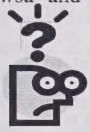
Sirad Shirdon
Year 4, History
University of Toronto (Mississauga)

It's "Assalaamu Alaikum" not 'ASA'!

"Assalaamu Alaikum!"

Do you remember hearing those sweet words which would make you happy happy (i.e. really happy)? These words bring Muslims together. The best of friends today at one time did not know each other and when they met they began their friendship with those very words. Of course, the reply to those words would be equally sweet: "Walaikum Assalaam" (And upon you be peace).

So can someone tell me how in the world did words as great as "Assalaamu Alaikum" become 'As,' 'Asa,' 'Aoa' and 'Aswrwb'?!? Or how the reply became any of 'Ws,' 'wsa' and 'Wrwb' (When I saw the last, I first thought it was a name of some TV station)?



Like Huh?!....

We have come to a time in our lives where communication via email has taken up a significant part of our lives. So why not use this form of communication to gain rewards as well? Various *Ayaats* in the Holy Quran and Hadiths mention the significance of saying 'salaam':

When those who believe in Our Ayât (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) come to you, say: "Salâmun 'Alaikum" (peace be on you); your Lord has written Mercy for Himself, so that, if any of you does evil in ignorance, and thereafter repents and does righteous good deeds (by obeying Allâh), then surely, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

[Quran, 6:54]

When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally. Certainly, Allâh is Ever a Careful Account Taker of all things.

[Quran, 4:86]

The Messenger of Allah, observed: You shall not enter paradise so long as you do not affirm belief (in all those things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love
amongst you: (i.e.) give currency to (the practice of paying salutation to one another by saying) as-salamu alaykum.

(Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in Sahih Muslim 96)

Allow me to demonstrate how time is easily wasted when it could be spent on more valuable things, rather than on situations where we do not gain any rewards. Here is a typical email to a friend:

> *Asa Ali,*
> *Did u see the Matrix Reloaded?!,*
> *Man!, that movie was da bomb!....can't wait till Matrix Revolution comes out! :)*
> Ws
> *Kamran*

Hmmm... can someone see the irony here? One thinks it saves time to use 'Asa' or 'Ws' instead of 'Assalaamu Alaikum' or 'Was-Salaamu Alaikum,' BUT that person still has the time to discuss movies. (On another note, I'm sure Kamran was really disappointed when Matrix Revolution actually came out ;)

I like watching and talking about movies too, but why not add 10 seconds more to type the proper salutation, thus using emails to gain rewards as well and aiding us in our goal to be successful in this life and the Hereafter?

Have we become so busy that we cannot take 10-15 seconds more to type the complete 'salaam' in our emails, even if it means losing out on those valuable rewards? (A lot of people can type a lot faster, thus taking up less time.)

I hope and pray that Insha'Allah, we all get rewarded for our *niyaat* (intentions); hopefully, the 'As,' or 'Aoa' will be considered as well, but do we really need to take that chance?

Our lives tend to get increasingly busy everyday. Does this mean that this habit is the beginning of a downhill trend which will culminate into verbally greeting a friend on the street, "Asa Muhammad"?!... GOD FORBID.

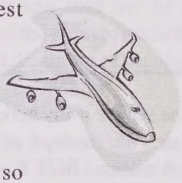
Jazak Allahu Khairan (not JAK or Jazaks ;) for reading.

Was-Salaamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatahu,

Farhan Muhammad Asrar
Faculty of Medicine

Our One Way Ticket to the Hereafter

Most of us have had the luxury of travelling somewhere at least once in our lifetime – whether it was a sleepover at a friend's or a relative's house, a camping trip, a vacation to a distant place or even our permanent migration here, to Canada, from another country. Preparing for a journey is no small job. It requires booking the flight, talking to a travel agent, choosing the location and picking the package that offers the best deal; it requires research and investigation on what kind of preparations are specific to the trip so as to make it the most enjoyable. On another level, it requires renewing our passports to ensure proper exit and entry into the area; it requires that we pack our bags, making sure to only take the most useful things and remembering to pack light because we don't want to drag a heavy load of baggage for the entire journey! There's a lot of work but we know that it will all pay off once we actually go on our vacation and get to relax. But until then... "Ladies and gentlemen, this is the final call for flight number..."...RUN FOR IT!! We're gonna miss the plane!!!



Dear brothers and sisters, whether we have all had the chance to be a traveller on a plane or not, I would like to remind myself and share my reminder with you that we are all travellers in this world, of this *dunya*— yes, mere travellers and not permanent residents. Our destination? The *hereafter* and *Jannah*, *Insha'Allah*. *Jannah* – where there are beautiful gardens with rivers flowing, where every fruit of only the most delicious kind will be available in infinite quantities, where no sleep nor slumber will overtake us and where we will only be taken by emotions of joy, happiness and pleasure. The duration of our stay there will be timeless, an eternal bliss.

Booking the Flight

There are no travel agents required for this trip, there is no middleman between us and Allah (Glory be to Him). He (Glory be to Him) has offered us this unique destination and all we have to do is prepare for it! We don't need to choose the best deal, it is all being offered to us without any fine print scams. The trip is if the highest quality - in fact, the destination is so beautiful that it is beyond our imagination!

Passport

How well are we preparing for this final destination? Are we researching the kind of preparations we need to take? We must perfect our *Imaan,* which is the preparation for this destination – unconditional trust and reliance in Allah (Glory be to Him) and servitude to Him (Glory be to Him). And our passport? It is the revelation to us from our Creator – the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* of His Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him). Reading, contemplating and applying the words of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* to our lives will ensure proper exit from this world and entry into *Jannah*.

Packing our bags

What shall we pack? This is the ultimate test in packing light! Brothers and sisters, none of the material possessions we acquire in this world will be carried to the *Akhira.* The only things we will carry with us is our deeds. Often times, as students working to meet deadlines and studying last minute for large tests, we tend to forget the insignificance of these tests and assignments in the larger scope of things. How is it helping us pack for our final destination? What is our purpose in completing this degree? Will it help us to give back to our *ummah* and help to elevate its status; will it help to earn a *halal* income to support our family? Or are we striving to attain a title, fancy home and car that will vanish as soon as we leave this *dunya?* Our intentions for attaining and our means of utilizing our material gains will determine its value for us in the *Akhira*, not any inherent quality of the object itself. What have we filled our bags with? Have we packed it with the priceless virtues and deeds that will allow us easy entry into *Jannah* or with material riches that will burden our journey there? *Insha'Allah,* we will have packed light so we can get to *Jannah* as soon as possible with as little setbacks as possible. The one who will have most efficiently packed his or her bags will be the one who had access to material riches of this world and has used it to benefit his or her family and *ummah,* and to strengthen his or her relation with Allah (Glory be to Him). It will be the individual who is prepared to let it all go as suddenly as he or she is prepared to accept the sudden visit of the Angel of Death to take his or her soul.

Flight Departure

We must rush to prepare for our flight for it may leave anytime, whether we are prepared or not and it's a non-stop, one-way flight to our Creator. Are we willing to jeopardize the vacation of a lifetime by being ill-prepared or missing it by a few minutes? Brothers and sisters, we must aspire to be prepared at any given moment and not be distracted and "caught off-guard." For everything we do, everywhere we go, everyone we meet, we must do so with a conscious intention and understanding of its significance to our ultimate purpose.

Your sister in Islam

Terrorism & the Muslim Community

The words "Muslim" and "terrorist" have become synonymous with each other in today's fabric of social communication. This stereotype, created by the media, has become so widespread and mainstream that any action performed or any statement given by a Muslim is quickly scrutinized for any possible terrorism links. The general perception of Muslims, by those who do not know or understand the religion of Islam, has become so tainted in negativity that the mere mention of the words "Islam" or "Muslim" invoke ideas of terrorism and even hate among people. But is Islam really what it's made out to be? Is it really an allegiance of foreigners committed towards doing harm? Can terrorists only be Muslim citizens and not people of any other religion or faith? A recent crime committed against the Muslim community and the subsequent arrest of the perpetrator made in Toronto, Canada shows this to not be the case.

Kevin Haas, 21 of North York, Ontario, was recently charged and arrested for the hate crimes committed on the campus of Ryerson University in downtown Toronto. Haas allegedly terrorized Muslim students in downtown Toronto with posters and graffiti encouraging the massacre and murder of all Muslim citizens in the world. He was also alleged to have sent multiple death threats against prominent Muslims attending the university. Haas, a former member of the Israeli National Defense who is currently out on $25,000 bail, has also been identified by Jewish community members of being a religious fanatic who may have been motivated to commit anti-Islamic hate crimes after visiting Israel last year. Haas' mother, Sonia, has also stated in a campus newspaper article at Ryerson University that "Muslims are spreading like rats." From what has become evident about this individual, it has become increasingly clear that religious fanaticism and was a strong motive towards possibly committing these terrorist acts against the Muslim community.

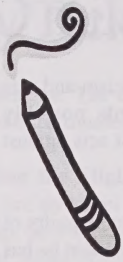
If Haas is found to be guilty of committing the hate crimes that he has been charged for, it will only further prove that members of faiths other than Islam can be terrorists and commit terrorist activities. Furthermore, this brings up a disturbing concept that has gone seemingly unnoticed when it comes to terrorism: Muslims may be the greatest victim of terrorists and hate actions in Canada. According to CAIR-CAN, a nonprofit organization that provides anti-discrimination and political advocacy in the media for the Muslim community, eighteen Islamic institutions and mosques have been the targets of hate crimes including attempted arson, destruction and defacement of mosque property, and graffiti threats. Five of those incidents have occurred in the last six months. From these eighteen incidents of hate committed against Islamic institutions and mosques, none have led to any arrests or charges. This alarming rate of failure to apprehend the perpetrators of these hate crimes only increases the likelihood of further attacks against the Muslim community. As well, a great number of incidents go unreported due to a fear of retribution and further assaults. This number may be even greater than the number of reported hate crimes incidents committed against other minority or religious groups.

In addition to the incidents committed against the Muslim community at Ryerson University and at Islamic institutions across Canada, another terrorist threat continues is faced by Muslims around the country – racial-profiling. Several Canadian Muslims have been arrested either in Canada or abroad of suspected terrorist links simply because of their name or ethnicity. An example of this is of Ottawa citizen Maher Arar who was detained and subsequently tortured overseas. A 34-year-old wireless technology consultant, Arar was detained by American officials at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport while in transit back to Canada from vacationing overseas in Tunisia. Twelve days later, he was chained, shackled and flown to Jordan aboard a private plane and from there transferred to a Syrian prison where he was held in a tiny "grave-like" cell and beaten, tortured and forced to make a false confession. What makes this situation even more disturbing is that it was information provided by Canadian security intelligence that led to this ordeal. Arar was found to be free of any criminal negligence and was subsequently returned back to his home in Ottawa. However, the fact that Arar had to face this despicable horror simply because of his name and because of his ethnicity is a serious concern for all members of the Muslim community. It puts this community on edge because any one of them could be the next Maher Arar for the same reasons. Racial profiling has emerged as a new threat and a new form of terrorism against the Muslim community here in Canada. The involvement of Canadian security intelligence makes this situation even more shocking.

Muslims have been depicted in the media so abhorrently that it has become difficult for them to shake off this despicable stereotype. Ironically, the religion of Islam is strongly entrenched in concepts of peace, humanity and social justice which only make this stereotype even more puzzling and confusing. However, it is not right to label one particular faith as being a

Continued on Page 26

Corner Poetry



The Eternal Ramadan

I do not want Ramadan to end
Yet, the feast after the fast is the trend

When morning meets night
And the sun beams ever bright

I will have a new chance
to attempt a better stance

I have failed to see Your composition at times
Breaking at points, walking the fine lines

But You loved to pull, to pull me back
Always willing to keep me on track

Words without thoughts do not fly
I feel you even more with each sigh

Powerful nights do not end here
After Ramadan, they do not disappear

We can be stronger against the salivating sucker
We will with His help tackle the Lost Other

Come Sha'ban, Rajab and Muharram
There is no defeating the belief of Islam

Asim Ashraf

The Sinner

Four walls built with crumbling earth,
A ceiling sealed with sheets of dirt,
No gap for nature's neon white,
To sweep through, save this cry of fright.
The monstrous walls start closing in,
Crushing bones and tearing skin,
A bone for bruises on her back,
A bone for "loser's" broken shin.
The walls retrieve, a chance to breathe,
two sparkling beads of red proceed,
Like a vine the vicious creature wraps,
Slithering through the nervous lap.
Infectious bites, a strangled neck,
For truth not told and word not kept.
Screams of terror, pain severe
echo. Yet mourners only hear,
The sound of silence above, they long,
For the peaceful rest of a good soul gone.

Silmi Shahama Abdullah

Snow is falling silently outside
covering all, sparing none.
The soft blanket encrusts vehicles and bare heads.
Snow makes everything quieter, makes everyone
creep along slowly on the streets, looking down so as
not to slip and fall.

But in here it's so warm. Oh, to have sleep at this
very moment would be wonderful. But I have to trudge
along home. Alone in the snow
Just like all the other sorry human beings out there.

Snow sounds so like death. Eventually catching all,
sparing none.
Death silences much, surrounds us
from every side before closing in.
And everyone must walk the path on their own to
eventually reach home
to find sleep. Beautiful sleep.
My eyes feel so heavy.

Asmaa Hussein

Al-Qibla Al-'ula

Precious Holy Land, now filled with pain,
Al-Qibla Al-'Ula, Falasteen it shall remain,
Living under occupation, washing away the blood stains.
Endless hearts aching while burying the Shahid's,
Struggling for liberation, wishing these deaths would cease.
Trying to continue although the homeland's denied,
Intifada #2 has begun, thousands have died.
Never giving up, on this struggle for freedom,
Enduring these hardships till the end, for Jerusalem.

Khadijeh Rakie

Waiting for catharsis

waiting for catharsis:
guilt presses a slab of marble on my chest
damping the rise and fall of my breathing.

trapped in this simple harmonic motion
I recount my regrettable deeds
And pass them slowly to tomorrow.

Each time I waste
The pendulum closes a cycle
And I lie on the prayer mat in awe.

There is no Purgatory to queue for
Only tar on hands I raise to God
With prayers too familiar.

Waiting for the potential
energy to cease my motion
back and forth into sin.

Carve pillars from my guilt
for palaces of hypocrisy.

The Pathopoet

Empower Yourself! Let your creative juices flow...join the MSA's very own Poetry Society! Email muslimvoice@yahoo.ca for more details.

Live now...Then Live Forever

I live day after day, night after night
Pleasing ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) is our purpose

I do what I do, the best as I can
Well I try to....
But knowing whatever I do,can't match
the Mercy & Love my Lord has blessed me with

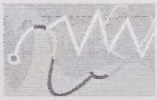
Every second counts, there goes one by
Did I use it wisely, will I be rewarded?....
ALLAHU ALAM

As long as the seconds are there,
I have to do my best
Well at least I'll try my best to

Is it not so ironic, meeting my Lord is a time I eagerly await,
But I fear it'll come too late

For it'll be a time when the books will be closed
No more good deeds can be enclosed

So don't waste your time & wait
LIVE NOW, to please your Lord before it's in fact too late



It's Now or Never!,
Lub-dub, lub-dub, lub—dub, lub——

——Then I open my eyes & live forever

Farhan Muhammad Asrar

Sid's Ponds and Gardenscapes Inc.
Specializing in Pond Supplies and Landscaping Materials
905-824-5104
6000 9th Line
Mississauga ON
(Corner of Britannia Rd. and 9th Line)

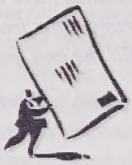
Continued from Page 23

"terrorist religion" when people of other faith groups regularly use their religious beliefs to justify their violent actions. The example of Kevin Haas is the most recent example of religious extremism being committed here in Canada as well as the several unsolved incidents of hate committed against Islamic institutions and mosques. A bias in the media may exist since media coverage and exposure of the hate crimes committed against Muslims have been much less visible than the hate crimes committed against other religious minorities. It may very well be that after falsely depicting all Muslims to be terrorists or to having terrorist links, the media may feel that any public interest on hate crimes committed against Muslim citizens and institutions is negligible. This would be quite unfortunate for the Muslim community since instead of being the cause of terrorism, they may be the greatest victims of terrorism in Canada.

Nauman Abbasi
Ryerson University

We want to hear from YOU! Send us your opinions, artices, stories, poetry or any comments, questions or suggestions to:

muslimvoice@yahoo.ca



The next submission deadline is January 20th, 2005

Nothing to be gained-but ashes

"Invite all to the way of your God with wisdom and beautiful preaching. And argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious... And if you do respond to an attack, respond no worse than they did. But if you show patience, that is indeed the best course. Be patient - for your patience is from God... Indeed, God is with those who restrain themselves and those who do good."
[Quran, 16:125-128]

I know the frustration, anger, and political motive that people have for burning flags – I've heard the justifications, the intentions, and the reasons. But I don't understand any benefit that comes from it. I know when the flames begin to rise, the citizen sees revenge, not fire. When the fabric begins to crumble and burn, they see this as the only symbol they have of the oppressor's downfall. But in their hurt, and rage, and bitterness, what they don't see is the aftermath of the fire. They don't see the damage that is done once the ashes have cooled.

When a flag is burned, it is not the oppressive government who is insulted. Au contraire, they benefit from this because it only serves to reiterate the point that they have been making all throughout their campaign – "these people are cruel, proud and heartless. Do you doubt it still?" And that one citizen, the average Joe who knows little of politics, or the intellectual who's willing to look at both sides of the issue, begins to have second doubts. Hurt will inevitably arise from witnessing the symbol of their patriotism, nationalism and pride being trampled upon in the most insulting of ways.

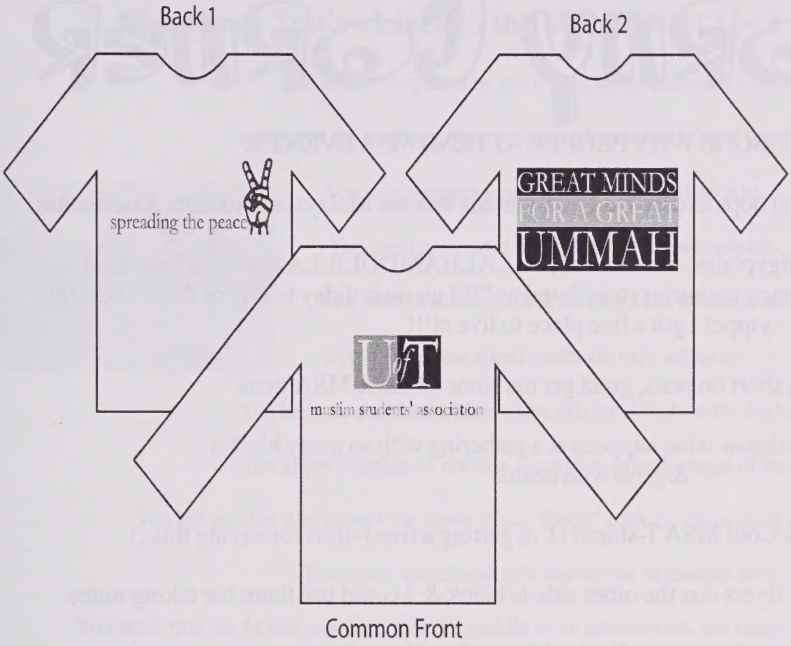
country, the flag is the incarnate of that nation,not of its government. It represents, to them, their home, and their pride. For all the justifications and reasons they are willing to listen to – for all the injustices their government has committed, all the hypocrisy being carried out by those in power, all the valid points brought up in their presence – most likely, they will not be able to get rid of the resentment lying within the innermost center of their heart, telling them that they, as a people, and not as a government, have been insulted. And their compassion ebbs away. And they begin to voice their concerns. Or anger, or doubt. And their sympathy weans.

And thus, the entire purpose of the act has been defeated. If preaching is the intention, then I believe education through our own conduct is the most effective way to show others the wrongs of the government. We stand against injustices - yes, always - with compassion, mercy and nobility, as the Quran dictates:

Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and in the race for a garden wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous- (the righteous are) those who spend whether in prosperity or adversity, who restrain anger and who pardon all people. For God loves those who do good. [3:133 -134]

Surely, something that stems from anger and shows no mercy, compassion or benevolence cannot be of Islam. As far as preaching, education and awareness go, there has to be a better way.

-Anonymous



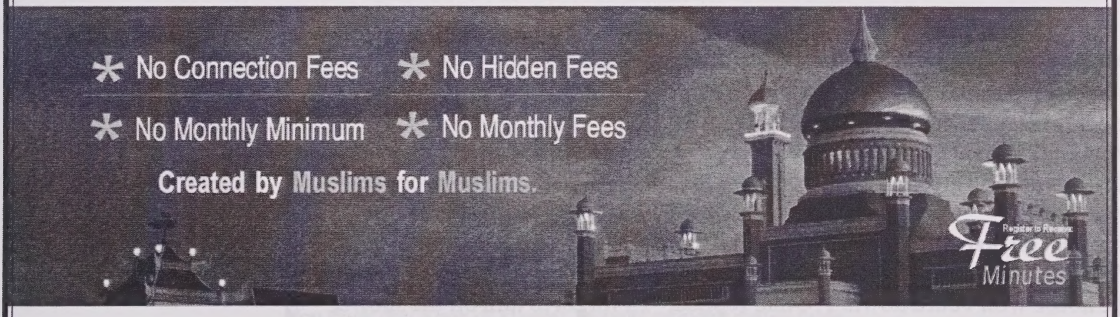
THEY FIT
RIGHT TO A TEE

$7.99 Long-sleeved
$5.99 Short-sleeved

On sale at all major
MSA Events

Contact msa.exec@utoronto.ca
for more information

Connecting Muslims from around the corner to around the world.



صدقه تل
SADAQATEL
connecting mulims

Make Your Call Today!
416.410.0786
www.sadaqatel.com

SadaqaTel is committed to setting aside 20% of their income towards Islamic relief efforts throughout the Muslim world.

The Corny Corner

TOP TEN REASONS WHY PEOPLE ATTEND MSA EVENTS!

10. Selamat petang (good evening) oops excuse me I thought this was the Malaysian Students Association

9. Pakistanis, Indians, Guyanese, Egyptains, Indonesians, etc...ALHAMDULILLAH (Praise be to God) its so great to have friends from so many countries (translated as "If I go on holiday to any of these countries yippe! I got a free place to live at!!!

8. I'm running short on pens, gotta get me some of those MSA pens

7. I was curious to know what happens at a gathering with so many hijabis & guys with beards

6. Just to buy those really Cool MSA T-shirts! (I'm getting a free t-shirt for saying this ;)

5. I'm just looking for leftover flyers coz the other side is blank & I could use them for taking notes

4. LIKE OMG, Dr. Jamal Badawi's coming, I'm his biggest fan. I hope I can get his autograph!!!

3. To gain rewards & increase my knowledge. Also to increase brotherhood/sisterhood on campus. (Hey!, got to be a little serious, no?!)

2. I hope to fulfill half my Deen
(Come on people! the M in MSA stands for MUSLIM not marriage/matrimonial/matrimony)

1. Free food!!!

Omar and his wife are in their car, driving to the mosque.
Suddenly his wife screams, "STOP THE CAR!!!"
"What is it?" Omar exclaims.
"Turn around and go back home!! I forgot to turn off the oven!! The house will burn down!!!"
Omar kept on driving.
"Why aren't you turning around?"
"The house won't burn down..." Omar replied, "...I forgot to turn off the shower."

How many Bush Administration officials does it take to change a light bulb? None. There is nothing wrong with the light bulb; its conditions are improving every day. Any reports of its lack of incandescence are delusional spin from the liberal media. That light bulb has served honourably, and anything you say undermines the lighting effort.

You Know You've Lived in the Middle East Too Long When:

You're not surprised to see a goat in the passenger seat

You expect the confirmation on your airline ticket to read "inshaAllah"

You don't expect to eat dinner before 10:30 p.m.

You need a sweater when it's 25 degrees outside

Your idea of housework is leaving a list for the maid

You believe that speed limits are only advisory

You have no problem with tractors driving 40kph on the highway

You know whether or not you are within missile range of Iraq

You get excited and spread the news when "Oreo" cookies show up at the grocery store

You know which end of a shawarma to unwrap first

You think that the further you inch into the middle of an intersection, the faster the light will turn green

You consider it normal for the same section of the road to be dug up three times by contractors in the space of a few weeks

You understand that the true definition of a nanosecond is the time interval between the light turning green and the guy behind you honking his horn

You think that all gas stations are made of marble

You can receive every TV station crystal clear except the local one

You get used to using the cold water tap to get hot water during the summer

You make left turns from the far right lane without a second thought

You expect gold for every birthday

You think Pepsi begins with a "B"

You think that a box of kleenex belongs on every dinner table

You think water only comes in bottles

You understand that when someone says "Bukra (tomorrow), InshaAllah" to you it really means "Sometime during this calendar year"...if you're lucky!

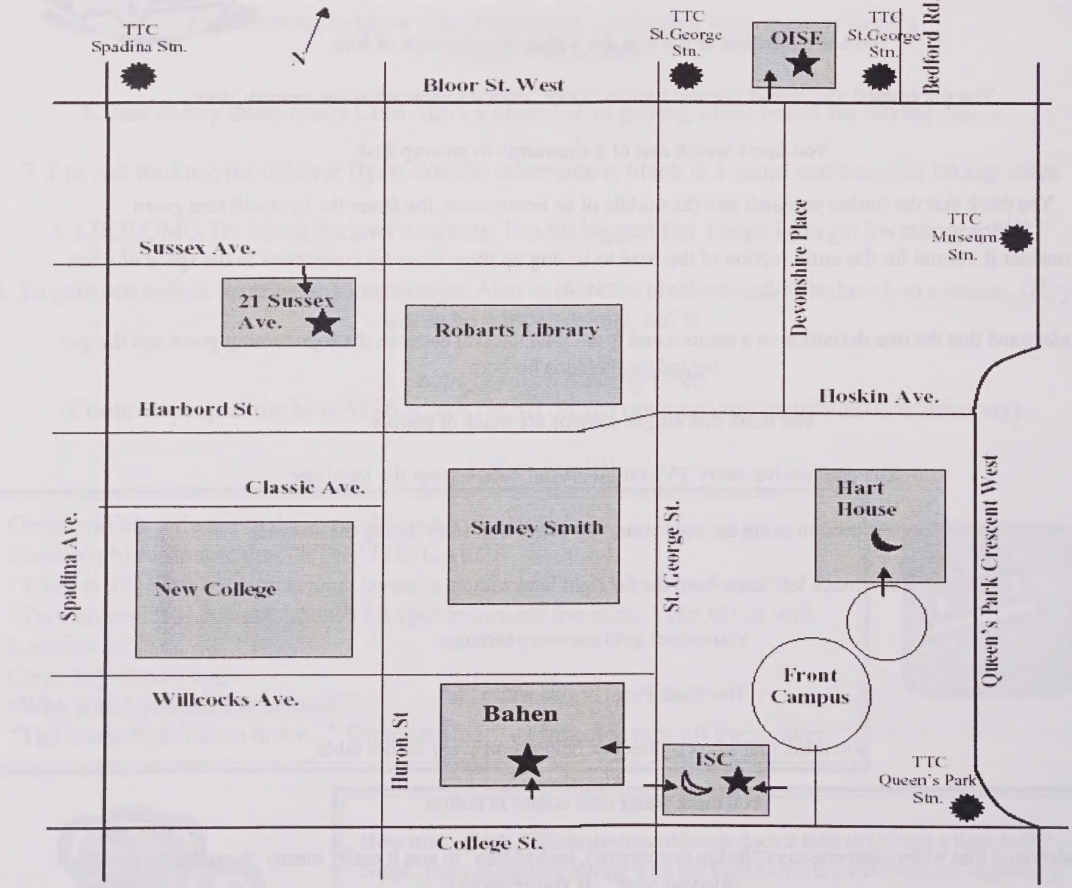
PRAYER SPACE ON CAMPUS

Daily Prayer Locations:
- **ISC** - International Students' Centre, 3rd floor
- **OISE** - 252 Bloor St.W., 8th floor, room 136
- **21 Sussex Ave.** - 5th floor, room 508

Main Jumuah Prayer Location, 1-2pm
- **Hart House** – 7 Hart House Circle, 2nd floor, Debates Room

Alternate Jumuah Prayer Location:
- **ISC** - International Students' Centre, 3rd floor

University of Toronto St.George Campus Prayer Locations



Muslim Students' Association, University of Toronto, St.George Campus
Website: http://www.utoronto.ca/muslim, E-mail: msa.exec@utoronto.ca
Hotline: 416-946-7788 (voice mail), Office: 21 Sussex Ave., Suite 405

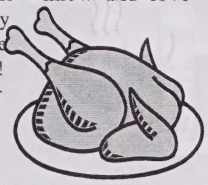
PLACES TO BE ON CAMPUS

Places to Eat

Halaal Restaurants:

Popeye's

Of course we all know and love Popeye's, and luckily for us, there's one right on campus! Just go to the corner of College and Spadina and you'll find one right beside the Burger King (on Spadina, just south of College).



Something to Talk About

This restaurant serves a variety of food: shawarmas, burgers, pasta, Mediterranean, and Indian food. They have shorter hours than other businesses, so you might want to check with them before you make the journey, only to find out that it's closed!

Directions: Go East on Collegeà right on University Avenueà left at first set of lights (Gerrard St.)à pass first set of lights on Gerrard; the restaurant is located in the yellow building on the left hand side of the street (78 Gerrard Street West).

Their phone number is 416-260-1752.

Exotic Tandoori

From the name, anyone can guess that this restaurant specializes in Indian Cuisine. The restaurant is located at 11 Charles Street West. Charles Street begins just North of the Museum subway station on the east side of Queen's Park (before Bloor St.!). The number there is 416-964-1616

Coconut Grove

Coconut Grove sells a variety of West Indian foods including curry (all types), roti, doubles, and chow mien. The food is very good, so if you have never had the chance to try West Indian food, you should really check this place out.

Directions: East on Collegeà South (right) on University à East (left) on Dundas; the restaurant is on the right side of the street.

Istanbul Pizza

The pizza at this place is unique, but tastes very good. They also serve Arab foods such as falafels and shawarmas. It's right beside Coconut Grove, so follow the above directions, and you should be able to find it.

Places to Pray

International Students' Centre (ISC)

A permanent prayer space has been designated for Muslim students on the third floor of the ISC (33 St. George St.).

Sussex Court

In the Sussex Clubhouse (21 Sussex Avenue), there is a multi-faith prayer room located on the 5th Floor in room 508.

OISE

For those who have classes at OISE (252 Bloor Street West), there's a multi-faith prayer room located on the 8th floor in room 136.

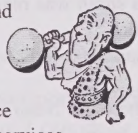
Masjid Toronto

For those who have the time, or are in that general area, Masjid Toronto is the best place to pray near the University of Toronto campus. The mosque is pleasant and comfortable. Masjid Toronto is not only there as a place of prayer, but can provide a peaceful escape from the city. For sisters, there is a comfortable lounge area located in the sisters' prayer area. To get there, travel East on College, then go South (right) on University Avenue. From University, go east (left) on Dundas St.; the mosque is located on the left side of the street.

Other Things to Do On Campus

ROM Friday Nights

If you're into history, art, or natural science, the Royal Ontario Museum is a great place to visit. On Friday nights from 4:30pm to 9:30pm, the ROM offers free admission for all ages, and no one can argue that free is not a good deal! The Museum is located at 100 Queen's Park, at the corner of Queen's Park and Bloor.

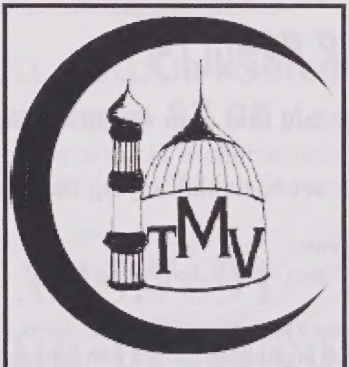


UofT Athletic Centre

After all that food, and since you're paying for these services, you might want to check out the Athletic Centre. For sisters who are kind of afraid to go for reasons concerning hijaab, the AC has provided women-only time slots for their weight room, which are Monday 12-1pm, Tuesday 5-6pm, Wednesday 12-1pm, Thursday 5-6pm, Friday 1-2pm, and Weekends 10-11am.

Bata Shoe Museum

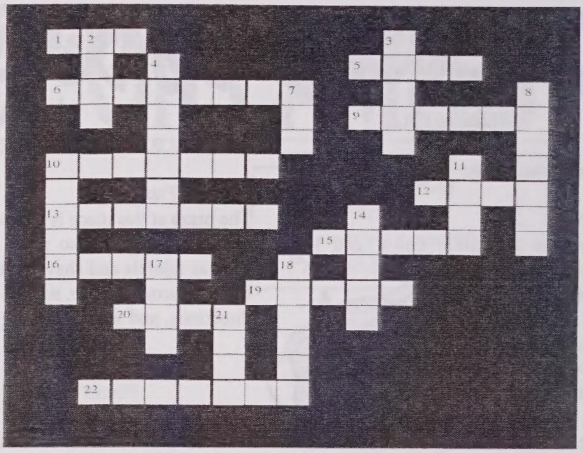
If you like shoes (really like shoes), you might want to check out the Bata Shoe Museum. Admission is not a whole lot: only $6 for adults. The Museum is located at 327 Bloor St. West at the corner of Bloor and St. George.



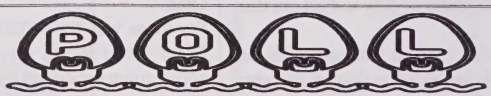
"Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not; a sense of humour consoles him for what he is."
-Francis Bacon

ACROSS:
1. Known as Sura-e-Maudhatyn
5. Was revealed after the treaty of Hudaibiyya in 6 AH
6. Surah Al-Ikhlas and Surah Al-_____: once started cannot be left halfway.
9. This surah was revealed twice; once in Mecca and once in Medina
10. Kaaba was built by these prophets; Abraham and _____
12. Where did Noah's ark rest after the great flood?
13. He guards the gate of the Paradise
15. He guards the gate of the Hellfire
16. A prophet who is also a prophet's son and a prophet's brother
19. English name for this surah is "The Dawn"
20. This surah narrates the story of "the Companions of the Cave"
22. Ayat-ul-Kursi is in Surah Al-_____

DOWN:
2. He is "Abu-Bashr"
3. We commemorate Mi'raj in this month
4. Day of the Rising
7. Who was the first person to be given the title of "Rasool"?



8. He conveyed the revelation of The Holy Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (sallahu alaihi wassalam)
10. The Angel of Death
11. Which surah refers to Allah's Kingdom?
14. This surah mentions about one of Prophet Muhammad's uncle
17. Which surah in the 30th chapter has a wajib sajdah
18. This surah does not start with Bismillah?
21. This eid is celebrated after the month of Ramadhan



YOUR RESULTS !

- 50% said they gain weight during Ramadan

- 50% are in denial, saying they lose weight!

Comments:

- I never gain weight!, I'm just big boned!

- I become a stick during Ramadan...that is, until Eid comes along and my fridge gets filled with samosas and sweets for a week! but you can only put so much food in there, and eventually some of it has to be relocated to my belly :D

- I think most people get a bit chubby and do notice it. BUT, for all those ppl always coming back for seconds and thirds and fourths, trust me man...they GOT VERY FAT. God didn't make them that way...they chose to get fat!!

- umm... i think i get thinner just cuz my mom has no excuse to feed me parathas every day.

- (A female TMV staff member writes) "I gained loads of weight because of the great TMV bake sales!! Not to mention the free iftars everyday..."

-You do double the fat during the fast, cuz you double up on the fried fat chicken **BUT** you also double up on the rewards in ramadan.

NEXT ISSUE'S POLL

What is your favourite hangout at UofT?

Send your answers to: muslimvoice@yahoo.ca

"Printing" for the job you needed yesterday

Design Print Copy Photography
Hi Res. Digital
Signs Bindery

Your image reflects our image. The projects that ***Minuteman Press*** produces for your company is how you are judged by others. Therefore our reputation is on the line with every job that goes out our door. From newsletters to annual reports, our printing reflects your image. The fact that ***Minuteman Press*** enjoys a large customer retention is testimony to the high quality image that we create for each of our customers.

Making you look good is what we do best.

1000 FULL COLOUR FLYERS
8.5 X 11 ... $355 • 11 X 17 ... $590
on 100# gloss text printed **both sides**
* Cover of this magazine printed on 100#

FULL COLOUR POSTERS
Starting from $7.00 / sq. ft.
Wide range of stocks available including
Vinyl, Photo Gloss, UV Inks, Canvas, etc.

Don't Take Chances - Bring Your Next Project To The Experts At

MINUTEMAN PRESS®

Where Your Satisfaction Is Always Guaranteed.

905.625.7691
info@min-press.com
www.min-press.com

MINUTEMAN PRESS®

1015 MATHESON BLVD. E., UNIT # 2, MISSISSAUGA ONTARIO CANADA L4W 3A4

** All prices are based on acceptable digital artwork supplied and do not include bindery. Some restrictions may apply. Must present coupon at time of order.*

NEW

Salam

Irfan Makki's Latest Album

Irfan Makki, featured artist on the Light Upon Light CD compilation, has released his first solo CD with a greeting of "Peace"! His debut CD, "Salam" offers up poems and images with the innocence of a child-like observer, and the wisdom of an elderly man - blended with world-beat percussion, South Asian rhythms and a distinctive urban R&B vocal style.

ITEM 710-021 **$14.95**

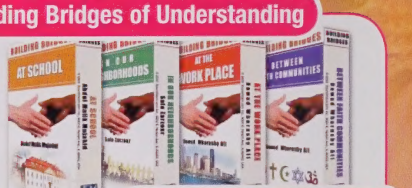
NEW

Al-Fajr Wall & Desk Azan Clock

Complete Azan for all Prayers
Fajr Alarm, adjusted automatically everyday
Daily Alarm (Weekend Optional)
Azan times (over 250 cities world-wide)
Qibla Direction (relative to North)
Hijri and Gregorian Calendar
Temperature
Wall and Desk Use

ITEM 9404-051 **$84.95**

Building Bridges of Understanding



Buy all 4 in $39.95 & Save!

Building bridges of understanding is the top priority of Muslims. It was the mission of the Prophet which his followers are responsible for carrying out. It needs to be done in the most beautiful way possible. How do you do it where people don't want to talk about religion? These four programs guide you on how to do it nicely, with love & care!

ITEM 110-306 **individual prices as $12.95**

Islamic Songs Audio Pack

7 albums by Dawud Wharnsby and others.

Cassette ITEM 213-070 **$49.95**
CD ITEM 710-070 **$99.95**

NEW

Little Farah Talking Doll

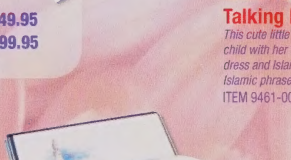
This cute little doll will delight your child with her wonderful Islamic dress and Islamic phrases. Recites 11 Islamic phrases in Arabic or English.

ITEM 9461-001 **$29.95**

NEW

Companions of the Prophet 1

Audio CD version of first volume with 30 life stories of the Sahabah (Companions) of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) will bring tears to your eyes and at the same time will inspire you. This set highlights aspects of the lives of 30 Companions of the Prophet, some famous, others almost completely unknown. The trials and triumphs of the early Muslims as individuals are portrayed in a way that we can learn much from their experiences. 5 CDs ITEM 710-023 $49.95



Understanding the Seerah

A unique set of lectures designed to bring you the noble example of our Prophet in three important areas - his connection with the youth; his empowerment of women; and his dealings with non-Muslims. Dr. Abdullah Hakim Quick, Sr. Aminah Assilmi and Br. Abdul Malik Mujahid, three well known and respected members of the Muslim community, share their insights through these extraordinary classes.

6 Cassette set ITEM 213-055 **$29.95**
6 CD Set ITEM 710-052 **$34.95**
6 Video Set ITEM 110-305 **$49.95**

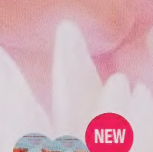
Access to Qur'anic Arabic - CD Version

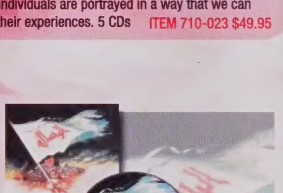
By AbdulWahid Hamid

An innovative and original approach to understand the Quran. 3 Volumes, 4 Audio CDs (available as complete set only)

ITEM 646-050 **$99.95**

NEW





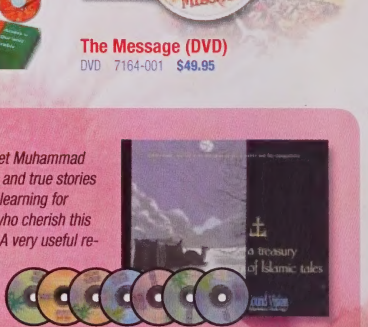
The Message (DVD)

DVD 7164-001 **$49.95**

A Treasury of Islamic Tales

A Treasury of Islamic Tales is based on the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions. 64 wonderful and true stories are so delightfully narrated, they have been a source of learning for children and adults of all ages! Join the many families who cherish this splendid collection of stories about the heroes of Islam. A very useful resource for children's education, and a great collection to keep in the car on long family outings.

7CDs ITEM 710-050 **$79.95**



Sound Vision.
helping tomorrow's Muslims today!

Address: 61 Dundas Street West (West of Hurontario & Dundas)
Mississauga, ON, L5B 1H7
Website: SoundVisionCanada.com
Email: Sales@SoundVisionCanada.com
Phone: 905-566-1444 *Fax:* 905-566-1443

Toll-Free: 1-800-560-8754
Open 9 am - 9 pm 7 days a week!